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THE MARY FLEXNER LECTURES
ON THE HUMANITIES

Volume I

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P A U L
His Heritage and Legacy

By


KIRSOPP LAKE

D.LITT.

Professor of History in Harvard University

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
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1934


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To

MARION EDWARDS PARK

President of Bryn Mawr College

Sometime Dean of Radcliffe College

PREFACE

SOME twenty years ago, at a Church Congress, Professor Burkitt warned his ecclesiastical audience that in the immediate future it would have to face moral rather than theological problems. To-day it is easy to see that he was right. Historical and critical questions of considerable interest even twenty years ago are now dead, rather than solved, because the rising generation thinks them unimportant. So far as theology still lives it is not concerned with the details of sectarian controversy, but with the fundamentals of philosophy, both phenomena and values. Who to-day is really concerned with the story of the Virgin Birth or of the Ascension? It is perfectly safe for any Protestant ecclesiastic to admit doubts on such points, because the rest of his world has ceased to be interested.

It is, however, far different with the theory of conduct advocated by the Church. I have long had in mind a certain number of reflections on the origin and value of this theory as expressed by the Early Church in general and by St. Paul in particular; and when, in 1932, I was invited to be the Flexner Lecturer at Bryn Mawr, I not only valued the invitation for its own sake, but for the opportunity it afforded of expressing and publishing these thoughts. It must be remembered, however, that in lecturing and in writing it is impossible wholly to follow the

same plan. There are therefore in this book several sections, some of them of considerable length, which are additions to or amplifications of the lectures. On the other hand, I probably said some things on the platform which have not found a place here.

It seems to me that thoughtful people, and especially the thoughtful young, are questioning the ecclesiastical code of conduct in two directions: on the one hand, it has had far too little to say on many of the great social and industrial problems which are troubling the world; on the other, it appears to lay down rules of which the wisdom is doubtful and the result is deplorable. Just as, fifty years ago, it was obvious that if the Church were to survive, unimpaired in strength and leadership, it must revise its theological statements because, as they were then worded, they appeared to be obviously untrue; so to-day the moral code of the Church is called in question, and it is perfectly clear that, as it stands, it fails to satisfy the demand for guidance made by a new and inquiring generation.

That is not because youth is asking for a lower or a laxer code, but because it desires one which will have the authority of truth, rather than the sanction of authority. Whatever may have been the case with the generation poisoned by the fumes of war, it is not true that that which is to-day passing from the bench of the student to the chair of the teacher is either frivolous or cynical; but it does not think that we, the survivors from the nineteenth century, ever faced or even saw the problems which interest

it. Possibly it underestimates the amount which we saw, and misjudges the capacity of its elders for learning, but in the main it is doubtless right. Nevertheless, those of us who have devoted much of our lives to special studies, without wholly shutting our eyes to what is going on in the world, can sometimes help a little by pointing out the history, and therefore the strength and the weakness, of the morality as well as of the theology of that marvellous generation which two thousand years ago turned the stream of life into channels which it has followed ever since.

The following pages make no pretence to be an introduction to the technical and professional study of the Pauline Epistles, but merely to explain the position which Pauline literature occupies in my own mind after a good many years devoted almost equally to the study of early Christianity and to modern problems. Early Christianity is a closed chapter, as are all the chapters of the past. It presented solutions for the problems of its own day, and by so doing set new problems for the future to face. Never is a new problem solved quite adequately by the solution of an old one, especially when the new problem is caused chiefly by the discovery that points regarded as data in the old solutions are either highly speculative or erroneous. Nor is anything gained by trying to modify the meaning of an ancient writer so as to suit modern conditions. Yet this is the game which has constantly been played with the Pauline literature, and it has often been accompanied by a

tendency to exaggerate the importance of St. Paul and to depict him as the real founder of Christianity. This is of course a mistake, for the Christianity which will survive is neither St. Paul's teaching about Jesus, nor that of any one else, not even of Jesus himself, but that which is freshly evoked in each generation by the spirit which animated Jesus and Paul in theirs.

Without Paul, however, Christianity would not have lived on: and no one can understand how not only Christianity, but civilization as a whole, has reached its present form, or been faced by its particular problems in theological and moral formulation, unless he sees to what an enormous extent St. Paul gave to the early Christian Church thoughts and conventions which were sufficiently, but not too far, ahead of the standards of its contemporaries. But as soon as he sees this he sees also that much which was once ahead of contemporary thought now lags behind it. Whether the ecclesiastical world will ever see this is doubtful, but those who do see it are the heirs of Christianity even if the name of Christian be denied them.

It seems a very short time ago that I was being taught this in England by such men as Rendel Harris and Conybeare. I saw a few problems then, and some of them are now on the way to solution. To-day I find more and more, after thirty years of teaching in great Universities, that the most important thing in a teacher's life is not to impart the knowledge of facts—which can be found much better in books—

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but to encourage another generation to look steadfastly at the vision which it sees, and to face its own problems in the light of that vision, controlled and guided by an understanding of what the past has done or not done. Vision we cannot teach—boys and girls have it or do not have it—but we can teach them to use that vision (and many of them have it) with the critical judgement and perception of 'ultimates' which alone can guide the visionary. For the future has a great task before it. We, the generation which is passing, have made life comfortable for more people in more ways than our ancestors ever dreamt of. But we have not made life happier. That is because we have studied circumstances, not conduct. Our children have begun to study conduct in the light of psychology, of a clearer knowledge of human appetites and desires, of human strength and weakness. I think that their reward will be a happier world: but my generation can neither enter that land of promise nor lead them into it. We shall die on this side Jordan, but so long as the life is in our bodies, we can tell them that the land is there before them, and explain the causes which made their fathers wander in the wilderness.

February, 1934.

K. L.

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INTRODUCTION

ANY determination of the nature and value of Paul's religious experience, and the terminology in which he expressed it, requires in the first place some consideration of his predecessors; for not only is all experience and all terminology dependent on inherited or acquired circumstances, but the position of Paul is part of a larger problem, historically more difficult though philosophically perhaps simpler.

This problem arises because, although something is known about the general nature of Christianity between the year A.D. 30 and a less clearly defined point towards the end of the first century, and also something about a quite different Christianity in the second century, we do not know how the one passed into the other. There is a chasm, partly of time, partly of thought, with clearly marked broken edges; the Church went across this chasm, but the path by which it travelled has disappeared.

In the narrative of the Synoptic Gospels and the early chapters of Acts a Christianity is found which was still manifestly a branch of Judaism; though it was, as can now be seen, preparing to break with the Synagogues it hardly realized it then. But when, perhaps forty years later, the time of 'John' and the Apostolic Fathers is reached, an essentially different type of Christianity is revealed, completely

separated from Judaism, and it has become one of the sacramental cults of the Roman Empire. In the first period eschatology and ethics, in the second sacramental regeneration and immortality are the predominant ideas. This is entirely clear, for the two sides, separated by less than half a century, are perfectly obvious; but where is the bridge from one to the other?

All that is known of the bridge is that there are as it were a few remnants of it, which show that at the Jewish end it was made by certain missionaries—notably Peter and Paul—who went from the primitive Jewish Church to preach in the Roman Empire. They failed to hold the Jewish world from which they started, but were the progenitors of that conqueror of the Empire which is called the Catholic Church. At the other—the Greek—end is the Catholic Christianity of such a man as Justin Martyr, and between these two bridge-heads there rises a broken pier, the work of a mysterious John. His general connexion with Catholic Christianity is clear enough, though the details are obscure, but the other piers of the bridge between him and Peter and Paul are missing.

This book deals with Paul and his contributions to the building of this bridge between Jewish and Gentile Christianity, but in the course of the discussion it is necessary to speak at some length of the banks which it joins. The first part will, therefore, deal with Paul's heritage, that is to say, the various elements which may have influenced him in the

religious and intellectual world which he, in turn, modified so deeply. The second deals with his experience and its expression; the third with the legacy of problems—or a portion of it—which he has left to us.

PART I

THE HERITAGE

I

ISRAEL AND JUDAISM

IN Jerusalem in the days of the apostles the most powerful, but not the most influential, class was that of the Sadducean priests. They dominated the official world and they possessed nearly all the money. That they were disliked by the Romans, and hated by their own people, does not alter the fact that until A.D. 66 they ruled Jewry. They contributed little to the intellectual and less to the religious life of the nation. Their chief care was that the right sacrifices should constantly be offered, for which purpose they held a cattle market, and that liberal contribution to the upkeep of the Temple should be made in the obsolete Jewish coinage, to provide which they established a bank. They respected the Law and assented to the prophets, but without enthusiasm, for they were the lineal representatives of the priests against whom the prophets had so often fulminated.

Far more influential, though less powerful, were the Pharisees, the spiritual forefathers of modern Judaism. Just as I have a deep dislike for the Sadducees, I have a profound respect and—up to a certain point—admiration for the Scribes and Pharisees. They were the legitimate descendants of the prophets, though, like the legitimate descendants of other families, they had preserved the language but lost the inspiration of their ancestors.

It is, perhaps, better to begin with those ancestors whose spirit—still speaking, though their bodies sleep—so deeply affected both Jesus and Paul.

Primitive men create their gods in their own image. The gods are exact though often fantastic representations, partly of what men are, partly what they would like to be. They have enormous power, strong passions, a keen sense of practical right and wrong but little of abstract justice. Fiction¹ is at this period the art of pleasing these gods and the priest is a professional in this art. He knows what sort of presents (sacrifices) the gods value and what sort of compliments (songs of praise) they like to hear, and finally how best to present petitions (prayer) to their attention. Moreover, if things go wrong, if the crops fail or the army be defeated, he can diagnose the reason why the people have offended (their sin) and prescribe the correct penalty, usually some sort of sacrifice. Besides the priest there were also prophets in those days, men who were directly inspired by the gods; they were sometimes members of the priestly order, sometimes not, but they differed from the ordinary priest, because he was merely a professional with a good knowledge of the traditional art of pleasing the gods, whereas

¹ I do not mean to deny that from the beginning religion may have contained the germs of what it has become—mystical, introspective, spiritual. But at first these were in the background, and other elements—cruel, obscene, and superstitious—which we now regard as irreligious, were in the foreground. A large part of the value of the study of the Old Testament is not that it reveals to us a perfect religion, but that it shows the evolution of religion from its dark beginnings.

they had a direct message. The message was not always true, because when the gods are angry they are wont to send their sinful people deceptive messages intended to injure them;¹ but even these deceptive messages always came from gods, and the prophets' knowledge of divine things was different from and essentially superior to that of the priests. There was no love lost between priests and prophets at any time, but as a rule the earlier prophets prescribed nothing more than some relatively unimportant variation of the treatment normally administered by the priests.

¹ But in the eighth century came one of the great 'jumps' in the intellectual and spiritual history of the race. One after the other men such as Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah arose in rapid succession, and in the most violent language denounced the whole apparatus of the priesthood. Like their predecessors, they claimed inspiration for their message, but the message was wholly different. God, they said, does not care for presents or compliments. He merely wishes men to behave well to one another. God does not want sacrifices, he does not want services of devotion and praise, and he does not desire to hear prayers, except from those who have qualified by their treatment of men to have the

¹ See, for instance, the magnificent story of how God deceived Ahab by sending a lying spirit into the mouths of all the prophets. It is true that one prophet had known the truth. But how was Ahab to know which was which? He followed the majority (400 to 1), and the voice of the majority was as poor a guide to truth as it is to-day.

privilege of addressing God. Micah summed it all up in one glowing phrase, 'What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.'

If, said these prophets, men would do this, all would be well with them; but if not they would be ceaselessly followed by misfortune, as they had been in the past. The question of what would become of the priests must have arisen, but, although it horrified others, it did not greatly affect the prophets, who were not emphasizing, perhaps scarcely saw, that the logical end of their teachings would be the abolition of all cultus.

Is it surprising that the traditional end of a prophet—of their class—was to be stoned? The amazing thing is that though this tradition is probably correct, it can be verified by authentic testimony in so few cases. 'More are men's ends marked than their lives before' is not true of the prophets. Their teaching lives for ever, but we know little of their deaths.

In the Northern Kingdom the prophets failed even to modify the worship managed by the priests, but their words were put into writing. Moreover, within a generation, the Northern Kingdom disappeared, as the prophets had said that it would, and this enormously increased the respect felt for them, especially in the Southern Kingdom.

Under Hezekiah, guided by Isaiah, sacrificial worship outside Jerusalem was restricted, though within the city it was more closely concentrated in

the hands of the priests. This may seem a ridiculous result for a fundamental attack, such as Isaiah had made, on the whole sacrificial system; but even this did not last long, for as soon as King Hezekiah died, his son, Manasseh, restored everything that had been abolished. From the point of view of his contemporaries, Manasseh was a conservative restorer of ancient religion, which had suffered from the ungodly and 'merely ethical'¹ teaching of Isaiah. Nor did Judah suffer extremely in this reign; on the contrary, it prospered. It must have seemed as though the prophetic reformation was dead. But once more a great prophet arose, Jeremiah, and another and greater prophetic reformation was carried out with the support of the High Priest and King Josiah. It continued the policy of concentrating cultus and so laid the foundations of the great fortunes of the Sadducean priesthood. 'It is', said these priestly reorganizers in effect, 'partly true that the Lord asks for mercy and not sacrifice, but we should avoid the fallacy of *entweder . . . oder*;² moreover these truths apply chiefly to rural districts. In Jerusalem the most crying need is for more meticulous care in the details of the sacrificial service, and for

¹ This term of abuse had not then been invented, but it would doubtless have been used if it had been. It is a most telling reply to unanswerable arguments.

² This pernicious phrase—all the more pernicious because it covers a half-truth—was especially loved in Oxford thirty years ago. It was supposed to represent a 'judicial spirit', and it was forgotten that the business of a judge is to give decisions, not everlastingly to postpone them. The *entweder . . . oder* dictum only brought sterility to a school which it was intended to make stable.

a new hymn book,¹ which will revise the language of the old hymns and bring them into closer accord with modern sentiment.'

Looking back one sees that this was really the beginning of the end of sacrifice. If you do not need sacrifice in the country, why is it necessary in the city? But for another five hundred years few Jews ever asked, still less answered, this question. Indeed they have never asked it. They retain the law-book which enjoins sacrifice, but the Temple has been destroyed and they are therefore mercifully spared the anguish of considering the problem which would arise if Jerusalem again became Jewish and the Temple were rebuilt.

Far more important, however, was the fact that simultaneously an attempt was made to formulate and put into a code of precepts the ethical teaching of the prophets. This first formulation either actually is, or is represented by, what we call Deuteronomy. It was of course a compromise and included cultus as an ethical duty, which is not the true prophetic teaching. But it did include the general prophetic theory that God's main requirement for men is that each should treat others justly, and it endeavoured to give concrete explanation of what 'justly' means.

That formulation, and the prophetic fire behind it, kept Judah alive during the exile, and still keeps

¹ I am assuming that the first 'Davidic Psalter' probably belongs to this period, but of course this is not certain. The great revisions of the Psalter are later.

it alive to-day. The real problem of Judaism is how far it can live if that formulation of conduct prove obsolete. The Jews lived through adversity by being in advance of their time: I doubt if they can do it again by being behind it. Anticipation of the future gives a safer hold on life than the most rigid retention of the past.

I have spent so long on this prophetic movement, six hundred years before the time of Paul, because, after all, six hundred years is but a moment in the history of man, and Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah are spiritually the immediate predecessors of Jesus, who may be described—with some distortion, which I hope to correct presently—as representing a ‘back to the prophets’ movement.

The chronological, as distinct from the spiritual, successors of the prophets were the Scribes. They made some further attempts to formulate the ethical teaching of the prophets. The last was made at a date which cannot be fixed, but is probably pre-Maccabean, and the result was the Pentateuch, the definitive edition of the ‘Torah’, the teaching of God, every word and every letter of which they claimed to be inspired, authoritative, and infallible.

As time went on it became more and more difficult for men to live under the Law. This did not worry the priests, and I suppose that the Sadducean teaching was, in effect, that men should not bother about trifles. ‘The Law provides an admirable series of sacrificial substitutes for right conduct. If you

unfortunately break the divine law, come to Jerusalem, and we will put you right.'

But together with and partly in opposition to the Sadducees a class of men grew up who were not satisfied with this 'break and make' system of keeping the Law. These were the Pharisees. They exhausted ingenuity in attempts at explanation, so that, though the Law could not be changed, it might at least be interpreted so as to be tolerable. The Pharisees kept the Law alive; they, and no one else, enabled Judaism to live through the shock of the destruction of the Temple, and to make the discovery that the Synagogue, with no sacrifices,¹ was an adequate substitute for the altars of the old cultus.

Although I am not a Jew and think that Rabbinic Judaism is certain to die, though not for a considerable time, I have, nevertheless, a great admiration for it, as one of the most awe-inspiring achievements of the human mind. To it we all, Jews and Christians alike, probably owe more than we do to any other single movement, and I have nothing but respect for those Jews who cannot tear themselves away from their spiritual mother, even though—or perhaps because—in their hearts they know that she is dying.

Judaism has often been regarded by Christians as cold, hard, and unsympathetic, holding its adherents by the fear and not by the love of God. But that is

¹ Should I say except at the Passover? The Passover was originally a sacrifice, but can the modern Passover be so termed? I doubt it. An almost exact analogue is the Eucharist in Zwinglianism; originally it was a sacrament but, though it survives, it is scarcely one now.

profoundly untrue. The heart of Judaism is the love of God. 'Hear, O Israel,' said the Moses of tradition, when for the second time he delivered the Law to the people, 'the Lord thy God is one, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy mind and with all thy life,' and he went on to explain that to do this is possible, because it is not an unnatural or a repugnant duty. For 'this commandment which I have given thee this day is not in Heaven that thou shouldest say, who shall go up to Heaven for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it, neither is it across the sea, that thou shouldest say, who shall go over the sea, that we may hear it and do it, but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it'. The Law, that is to say, is the formulation of all the best in man's own spirit, so that life under the Law is happy as well as righteous.

Such doubtless was the feeling of many of Paul's actual contemporaries—of, for instance, Rabbi Jokanan Ben Zakkai, a noble spirit whom I like to think of as having perhaps been one of the Pharisees in the Sanhedrin when Paul last appeared before it.¹ Paul was brought up among such men. Why did he turn against them so violently? This question I hope to discuss presently, but before doing so there are other predecessors of Paul to be considered.

These are the Apocalypstists, a strange group,

¹ I fear that he probably was not, though his life overlapped that of Paul.

flourishing in the centuries just before and after Christ, which has left behind it a still stranger literature and lives again—much deteriorated—in the utterances of the Pre-millenarian Fundamentalists of America.

The general position of the Apocalyptists was based on God's unfulfilled promises. He had offered Israel prosperity, power, and happiness, and Israel had received adversity, subjection, and misery. Why was this? How long would it last? When and how would the promises really be fulfilled? The answer was given partly in semi-philosophic discussion, such as we find in IV Ezra, but still more in marvelous visions, supposed to have been seen by the great men of antiquity, explaining the course of history. Such is the character especially of the Apocalyptic part of Daniel and of the book of Enoch, and any one who will read Daniel, Enoch, and IV Ezra will learn nearly all of importance for the study of the New Testament that is to be known from Jewish Apocalyptic literature.¹

The main features of these visions are the following three points:

1. They picture a double world—Heaven above and Earth beneath—so that the nations of earth have their counterparts in Heaven above. Thus, for instance, in the book of Daniel, where a key is given to the visions, a heavenly leopard represents

¹ Baruch, Jubilees, the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Psalms of Solomon, and smaller books increase the evidence but do not seriously change its character.

Persia, a ram Macedonia, an awful composite monster the kingdom of Antiochus Epiphanes, and the house of Israel is represented by a man. In the natural Aramaic idiom he would be described as a 'Bar-nasha', which means, 'A Man', but would be translated literally by 'Son of Man'. It must be remembered that this was not intended for allegory or symbolism. To the writer the creatures in Heaven are as real as the nations of Earth. Of course, no two seers saw quite the same, but there is a considerable similarity between the visions.

2. In some, though not in all, Apocalypses the theory is expounded that the complete fulfilment of the promises of God will be made only after the present world has been destroyed. Then will come the 'Life of the World to Come', freed from all evil, and into it all the righteous will pass. It will be in the same locality as this World, that is to say, it will be on Earth, not in Heaven; but it will be a 'made-over' earth, and will be chronologically separated from the world in which we now live.¹ Not only the living but the dead will share in the Life of the World to Come, if they are found to be righteous; and to settle this question there will be a judgement, either by God, or by a man from Heaven—the Man who figures in the book of Daniel. This Man is in Enoch designated as 'chosen', or more literally 'anointed', by God.

¹ It should be observed that the philosophic distinction between 'everlasting' and 'eternal' plays no part in the Apocalypses or in the Synoptic Gospels.

Some, though not all, Apocalypses also hold that the promises to Israel will not only be completely fulfilled in the World to Come, but will also receive a preliminary partial fulfilment in the 'Days of the Messiah', which will immediately precede the 'End of this Age'. In these days Israel will be put under the leadership of some one who, like the Son of Man at the end of the Age, will be anointed (that is, designated) by God for that purpose. Sometimes it was thought that this Anointed One would be a priest, but more often it was expected that he would be a Prince of the House of David. So far from this hope for a Prince playing no part in Rabbinic Judaism he is in the Talmud sometimes called the 'Anointed King' *par excellence*; but I do not think that, at least for some centuries, he was ever confused with the Anointed One who would come from Heaven at the end of this Age.¹ The 'Messianic Age', to use a phrase as rare² in Jewish as it is common in Christian literature, is not the Age to Come, but a limited period at the end of the present

¹ It is dangerous to make negative statements about what is not found in the Talmud. But those of us who are not Talmudic scholars will find a safe source of information in G. Klausner, *Messianische Vorstellungen im Zeitalter der Tannaiten*. I know no other book which so skilfully distinguishes, yet shows the relations between, 'the Days of the Messiah', and the 'Age to Come'.

² It is rare because in Jewish thought there are only two 'Ages'; 'this Age' and 'the Age to Come'. The Days of the Messiah are not a separate Age but a short period at the end of 'this Age'; and the work of 'the Man from Heaven' is not an Age but a judgement held between the Ages. It should be also noted that the verbal distinction in English between Age and World does not exist in Hebrew; 'Age to Come' and 'World to Come' are identical.

Age,¹ in which fulfilment will be given to the especial promises of God to Israel, as distinct from those promises which were made to all the righteous.

This Apocalyptic literature has in recent years been the centre of much discussion among the learned. The majority of Jewish scholars, and some Christians, have been inclined to argue that it is the product of a small and unimportant group of men who never had any real influence. Others, with equal exaggeration, have regarded it as the most living element in Judaism in the centuries immediately before and after Christ.

It is, as a matter of fact, obvious that official Judaism never encouraged the Apocalyptists. Their doctrines, though not unknown, and not wholly repudiated, play very little part in the Talmud, and no Jewish Apocalypse is fully extant in Aramaic.² But it must not be forgotten that Judaism was more of a life, and less of a creed, than Christianity has ever been. Provided a Jew worshipped the true God

¹ This view of the 'Days of the Messiah' as a limited period before the End is found in I Corinthians, and in the Revelation of John the Divine, where its duration is fixed as a thousand years—the millennium of the Fundamentalists. In IV Ezra it lasts only 400 years.

² May it be noted that I hesitate to say 'the original Aramaic'. The evidence for the 'originals' is linguistic, and when, as is the case with Enoch, we are arguing from a manifestly corrupt Ethiopic (through Greek?) to a Hebrew or Aramaic original, I feel sceptical. Much of the argument is merely due to the fact that Dr. Charles's great knowledge of Ethiopic made him see that a corrupt Ethiopic phrase might be derived from an ambiguous Aramaic one. Unfortunately he was inclined to translate his emendations, not the text.

and lived according to the Law, he could believe or teach any nonsense he liked. Sensible men might exclude him from their society, but he was not outside the Synagogue of Israel. Moreover, though the Talmud does not quote, much less discuss, the extravagant construction of future history and the fantastic chronology which characterize the Apocalyptists, it not infrequently refers to the 'World to Come' and 'The Days of the Messiah' which are really the central points in Apocalyptic teaching.

Similarly the Gospels in their present form are full of Apocalyptic teaching, and the later Gospels have less than the earlier, so that it would take first-rate evidence, of which there is not a shred, to show that the Apocalyptic element is a late 'Jewish interpolation'. It is far more 'an early Jewish survival'. One of the books of the New Testament is an Apocalypse, and was so from the beginning.¹ Educated Christianity in the East did not like the book—with good reason—but it was too firmly rooted to be turned out of the Canon. So too in our time those who dislike the Apocalyptic point of view, and cannot contemplate calmly the possibility that Jesus ever held opinions which they cannot share, have been anxious to maintain that the Apocalyptic element in the early Church is an accretion, but this view has steadily lost ground and is now almost extinct.

¹ The 'beginning of the Canon' is a vague phrase. It is possible that the first Canon was everywhere, as it certainly was in the Syriac Church, 'The Gospel' and the Pauline Epistles. But if so the Apocalypse (except in Syria?) must belong to the next stage, and I doubt whether in the west the 'Canon' ever lacked the Apocalypse of John.

In Jewish literature there still remains one other school which probably affected Paul. The writings of Philo, the Greek-Jewish Wisdom literature, and the Jewish Sibylline oracles reveal that in the Roman Empire outside of Palestine there existed a type of Judaism which was accommodating itself to Hellenism in thought even more than in practice, and was in this way parallel to the Reformed Judaism of to-day.

One point stands out as important. Allegory was used freely in order to convert the Pentateuch into an exposition of partly Platonic, partly Stoic, Greek philosophy, while retaining its authority as revelation. In this respect it did for Judaism what Plutarch did for heathenism. Philo still maintained the literal truth of the Pentateuch and the need of obeying it, but he thought the allegorical meaning more important, and—a true institutionalist—he regarded with horror those who went farther than he did on the path which he had pointed out. But his horror indicates that such persons existed, and continued to regard themselves as Jews though they had given up circumcision, the Sabbath, and ceremonial washing, in favour of the abandonment of carnal lusts, the pursuit of the peace and rest of the soul, and the purification of the heart.

There is no reason for thinking that Paul or any other Christian writer of the New Testament period was acquainted with Philo,¹ but none for doubting

¹ If any were, the author of Hebrews seems to me more really Philonic than John. For John the evidence is the use of 'Logos'. This

that this 'liberal' type of Judaism was 'in the air' and made it easier for Paul and others to abandon the practice of the Law.

One more point may perhaps be made which is of interest for the history of religion, though not for the interpretation of Paul.

Philo and liberal thought dominated Judaism in Alexandria in the first century. We have a clear picture of them. Then the curtain goes down and does not rise again until the end of the second century. Where at that time is Liberal Judaism? It has vanished. The result of the fall of Jerusalem was not only the abolition of the priests and Sadducees in Palestine but a wave of 'fundamentalism' everywhere. For centuries Judaism was sterilized.

But the spirit of Philo did not die. When there was no room for it in Judaism it went elsewhere; the name was changed but the reality remained, and the allegorical Christianity of Alexandria is the reincarnation of the spirit of Philo. Had Philo been told that this would be so he would doubtless have been horrified; but thought, like religion, does not perish with the institutions which partly cherish and partly strangle it, and one of the most complex problems of life is for those who love the institutions to which they belong, but value yet more highly the breath of life, to know when cherishing has passed wholly into strangulation.

seems to me more Philonic than it does to Prof. Burkitt, but to argue from this to real knowledge of Philo is like arguing that those who speak of 'relativity' have read the writings of Einstein.

II

JESUS

INCOMPARABLY the most important of Paul's predecessors is, of course, Jesus. What do we know of him, and from what documents? The answer to the latter question is more generally agreed upon to-day than formerly, and, though it can still hardly be taken for granted, the main result of a century's study of the four Gospels indicates the following points:

1. The Gospel of John is the latest of the four. It has enormous value for the history of the teaching of the early Catholic Church, and the whole edifice of Catholic doctrine is based on it. But it has little value for any reconstruction of Jesus as he really was, or of the teaching of Jesus as he really gave it.

2. Of the other three Mark is the main source of the narrative portions in Matthew and Luke which—especially in Matthew—may be regarded as later editions of Mark.

3. Matthew and Luke have also incorporated a source, or sources, giving some account of the teaching of Jesus, with relatively little narrative attaching to it. It is often called Q. No reconstruction of the probable contents, to say nothing of the probable text, of this document or documents has yet been made which at all commands general assent. Probably it cannot be; but from Matthew and Luke

we gain a general impression of the teaching of Jesus, though we cannot press the details.

In discussing the followers of Jesus, it will ultimately be desirable to ask what was the purpose of the writers of the Synoptic Gospels, but that question can wait for the moment. At present the question before us is, what do the Synoptic Gospels tell us about the work and teaching of Jesus himself?

The Gospel of Mark, to begin with it, tells us that Jesus with many others went to John the Baptist, who offered a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; that when he was baptized he was conscious that the Spirit of God entered into him, and that he heard a voice from Heaven saying that he was God's beloved son whom God had chosen.¹ He then had a struggle with the devil in the desert, in which he was triumphant, and returned to Galilee to begin a double ministry. He drove out demons, healing the diseases which they had inflicted on men, and he preached. The content of his preaching was that the Kingdom of God was at hand, and that men must repent if they wished to enter the Kingdom. It is tolerably obvious that the 'Kingdom of God' here means the 'Life of the World to Come', and Jesus calls it so because in the World to Come the sovereignty of God will be complete, supreme, and universally recognized. At first he announced this in the Synagogue, but the authorities turned him out

¹ I think that this is certainly the meaning, and probably the best translation of the Greek *ἡδόκησα* which undoubtedly does not mean 'well-pleased' in the sense of 'approbation on past conduct'.

and prosecuted him—not because of his teaching, but because in his campaign against disease and demons, and in his daily life, he and his followers neglected the Law, especially the laws of the Sabbath and of ceremonial purity. Therefore Jesus left the Synagogues and preached in the open air; finally he left Galilee and went into Syria, and then came back, past Galilee, down the Jordan valley to Jerusalem, where his conduct in the Temple roused the hostility of the priests, who persuaded Pilate to put him to death as a danger to society.

So far as teaching goes Mark tells us very little indeed. The amazing and often forgotten fact which he emphasized is that in his opinion Jesus taught in parables ‘in order that’¹ the people should not understand his meaning. Apparently the point which the writer believed that Jesus wished to hide was that he was the ‘Anointed One’. This was a secret, which some of the disciples discovered but were told not to reveal until after he had risen from the dead; and, though the Gospel is unfortunately incomplete, there is little doubt that it ended originally by describing the appearance of the risen Jesus to those disciples who had learnt this secret. The Gospel of Mark obviously intends us to believe that Jesus himself as well as his disciples accepted as true the statement that he was the ‘Anointed One’, and that by this he meant the ‘Man from Heaven’ (referred to in the Greek as the ‘Son of Man’, literally

¹ ‘In order that’ is the meaning of the Greek: attempts to give any other translation are subterfuges.

translating the Aramaic) who was 'anointed' by God as his representative to judge the living and the dead at the End of the Age.

That Jesus, beyond all question, expected the coming of this Man from Heaven and the speedy coming of the End is quite clear, but I am doubtful whether he believed that he was himself the Man from Heaven. The Gospel as a whole proves up to the hilt what the Evangelist believed, but not what Jesus did. The evidence for my doubts can be given in a few words.

1. In Mark xiii Jesus tells his more intimate disciples—not the rest of his followers—exactly what he thinks about the End. It is, as it were, a summary of his eschatology. Three points stand out clearly: (a) The End will come before that generation has passed away; but Jesus does not know exactly when it will be. (b) At the End the Son of Man (the Man from Heaven) will appear on the clouds of Heaven. (c) Jesus does not say that he is this 'Son of Man' though the Evangelist clearly thought so; he refers to him in the third person, and to himself in the first.

2. In Mark viii. 38 Jesus says: 'Whosoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this sinful and adulterous generation, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he comes', etc. It is clear that Jesus expects the coming of the Son of Man, but does he identify himself with that Son of Man, or does he mean that the Son of Man, when he comes from Heaven, will refuse those who did not listen to Jesus on earth?

3. In Mark xiv. 61 the High Priest asks Jesus if he is the 'Anointed One', 'Yes', said Jesus, 'and you shall see the Son of Man,' etc. Once more, Mark doubtless thinks that Jesus meant himself; but did he? 'Anointed One' means commissioned by God, and the nature of the commission depends on the context. He could not deny that he was divinely commissioned, but it seems to me that the commission of which he was conscious was to preach to men that they should repent in order that they might be safe at the End.

For these reasons I do not think that Jesus can have meant himself. Moreover, in the Apocalyptic literature, and in the teaching of Jesus, the 'Man from Heaven' is a Man who is in Heaven, who never has been on earth, and is reserved in Heaven until the End, when he will come on the clouds of Heaven, from Heaven, to judge mankind. If so, how can he and Jesus be the same? Jesus was already on earth: he was warning men that the Son of Man was coming, not that he had come. To give that warning was his commission, for which he had been 'anointed'; to do that, and to tell them how they might be able to stand before the Son of Man when he came. He knew that he was 'anointed'—he was sure of his message—the only thing he doubted was whether men would believe him and repent; whether, when the Son of Man came, he would find faith in the earth.

His disciples also knew of his belief that he was 'anointed', and they shared it. But they went

farther: they wished to interpret it in connexion with one or another spectacular belief of their own time. First perhaps—indeed probably—they thought that Jesus was the ‘Anointed One’ who would restore the Kingdom to Israel. Afterwards, when they believed that he was risen from the dead and was in Heaven, they modified his and their belief in the coming of the Man from Heaven, identified Jesus with this Anointed One, and so came to think of his ministry as a ‘first coming’ of the Son of Man—something of which there is no trace in the whole of Jewish Apocalyptic literature.

This, however, is a relatively minor point. The fact of importance is that according to Mark the teaching of Jesus was a call to repentance, based on the speedy approach of the End and the coming of the Man from Heaven.

If we wish to know more about the definite form which Jesus thought that this repentance should take we must turn to the information given by Matthew and Luke, which may readily be summarized:

1. There is the eschatological warning, and—if we make allowance for a certain amount of redactional change—again it is not clear whether Jesus or only the editors of the Gospels thought that he was himself the Son of Man who would come on the clouds of Heaven.

2. There is an explanation of ‘repent’.

3. There is an explanation of what Jesus regarded as the proper attitude to the Law.

It is these last two points which need discussion. The meaning which Jesus gives to 'repent' is the same as a Jewish rabbi would have given, except that he does so with far greater emphasis and—if one may use the word—violence. Repentance means a change of life. It would be wrong to say that it is a change of conduct as opposed to a change of mind, but the real emphasis is on actual conduct, and it is assumed rather than stated that conduct expresses mind. The ideal of conduct was taught by the prophets and is expressed by the Law, but the mistake of the Scribes according to Jesus is that they do not go far enough into the motives of conduct; they emphasize small unnecessary details, but overlook matters of principle. When the Law says 'Thou shalt do no murder', it is not enough for us to abstain from actually killing any one; we must not even get angry. When the Law provides 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth', it means that no one who has been injured shall receive more than the equivalent in return, but Jesus contends that we should accept injury and ask for nothing in return. Love your enemies—any one can love his friends—and do good to those who injure you.

Those who do these things will inherit the Life of the World to Come. Yes: but who can do them? They are impossible requirements. Jesus almost, if not quite, admits this. 'Strait is the way and narrow is the gate which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it'. He did not think that many would be saved; 'many are called, but few are chosen'. Thus

the ideal of conduct at which Jesus asked his penitents to aim is impossibly high, but that does not exhaust the meaning of 'repent'. There is still one way open to all, and this is a way which the prophets of Israel and the rabbis of Judaism taught just as plainly as Jesus. It is bound up with the full meaning of repentance. 'When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness which he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right he shall save his soul alive', said Ezekiel; and Jesus said that there is more joy over one sinner that repents than over ninety and nine just men who need no repentance. He expressed his meaning in the most beautiful of all parables, the Prodigal Son, and the rabbis provided the exact parallel to this story in their account of the very wicked rabbi who suddenly recognized his sins and repented with such sincerity that he died: and, as he died, a voice from Heaven announced that he had inherited the Life of the World to Come. 'For', explained the head of the Synagogue to those who thought that this was strange, 'there are those who inherit the World to Come for a long life of good deeds, others for one hour of repentance.'

To the Scribes who heard Jesus his teaching probably seemed to be lamentably weak. They did not realize that he was presenting a standard of life higher than their own. They noted only that he was not interested in the law of the Sabbath, or in ceremonial cleanliness. It does not appear that Jesus actually neglected these laws, if there was oppor-

tunity for keeping them, but he insisted that if such rules stood in the way of doing good it was the Law which had to yield. 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.'¹ He even did worse; he actually laughed at the puerility of some of the rules of the Scribes. Laughter is a most effective weapon in controversy, but it is never forgiven.

The rabbis do not appear to have tried to answer Jesus; they adopted the time-honoured practice of trying to discredit him as lacking in moral principles and spiritual insight; he was 'a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber'. Nor were they necessarily dishonest in so doing. It is usual for the purblind to think that others cannot see.

It is a very ordinary, but complete mistake to suppose that the ethical teaching of Jesus was essentially new, or that it was the main factor in the Christian conquest of the Roman world. It was a very forcible and even paradoxical exposition of the

¹ It is not always recognized that Jesus refers to Deuteronomy. The Old Testament has two forms of the Sabbath-rule. The first—the well-known one—justifies it by a reference to the days of creation; the second in Deut. v. 13 f. says: 'Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work,—but the seventh is a Sabbath unto the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, . . . that thy servant may rest as well as thou.' This form is clearly the one in the mind of Jesus when he said that the Sabbath is made for man. That Sunday schools, and other institutions which try in some way to defend the observance of the Sabbath, should continue to teach children a form of commandment containing a reason which they cannot possibly accept, while there is a parallel form, referred to by Jesus, giving a reason which commends itself at once, is an amazing piece of stupidity.

altruistic ethics which were the basis of the teaching of the prophets and of Judaism. It was fundamentally correct teaching; so was the ethical teaching of the Rabbis in the Jewish world, and of the Stoics in the Roman. The teaching of Christianity differed from that of the Rabbis, the Stoics, or Jesus, by presenting Jesus to the world as a supernatural Saviour, a divine being who issued commands and had the power of life or death in his hand. His teaching was therefore preached, and, to such small extent as human nature permitted, was practised, but this was secondary and, as it were, incidental to the doctrine of the Church about Jesus.

His was very magnificent teaching. Yes, but it was teaching: not legislation. The business of the legislator is to lay down sound rules for conduct, which an average man—or somewhat less—will have no great difficulty in observing. The business of the teacher is to make men see a vision of life as they can never live it, and of a world which they can never inherit, so that they will struggle to make that which they pass on to their children approach a little more closely to the vision which they have seen. For instance, to say ‘Thou shalt do no murder’ is good legislation, and has been so for some thousands of years, but to say ‘Thou shalt not be angry with thy brother’ would be absurd legislation though it is magnificent teaching. Every one knows in his heart that anger is a mistake, it is wrong. Even to see for a moment the vision of life without anger raises us above the level on which we habitually

dwell, and the constant effort to approach more nearly to that vision has always been the truest following of Jesus; for the followers of Jesus to-day, as then, are sinners whose claim to be disciples is that they do not think that they are saints.

Nevertheless, magnificent as was the vision which Jesus presented, if we wish to consider it historically and to preserve its brilliant and paradoxical character, we must remember one thing and avoid another.

In the first place we must always remember that much of the teaching of Jesus was conditioned by his firm belief that the End was at hand. This affects for instance all his teachings about wealth. He taught, I am convinced, that perfect conduct would mean the selling of all property and giving it to the poor; all attempts to explain his teaching on this subject as referring to exceptional cases, or as merely inculcating liberal charity to deserving cases, seem to me rather silly subterfuges. The teaching of Jesus on this subject is quite plain and was caused by his belief in the approaching End: if the End be not approaching such teaching is not only impracticable¹ but undesirable.

Secondly, we must avoid the error of thinking that

¹ Communists assure me that it will be practicable and will be done under Communism when no individual will possess anything—all will belong to the State. Quite so; but giving the management and distribution of wealth to the State instead of to rich men is not the same thing as giving to the poor. Communism might abolish poverty (or it might make it universal) but it does not wish to abolish wealth, merely to rearrange it.

the teaching of Jesus gives us an easy solution of our present social and economic difficulties. One hears too often echoes of sermons and addresses which say, in effect, that all the world needs is to practise the Golden Rule and remember the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. There is a sense in which that is true. Let me take a parallel. There is, for instance, also a sense in which it is true that financial houses need to remember the principles of the multiplication table, since the basis of all permanently successful trade is that what you get must exactly equal what you give, otherwise in the end one or the other party in the exchange will be beggared and trade will cease. A tradesman is ruined by the bankruptcy of all his customers as certainly as he is by his own. Therefore, in estimating this very delicate problem in balance, financiers cannot succeed—permanently—if they neglect the multiplication table in making up their accounts. Similarly, it is very true that the foundation of all permanently successful society is to do to others as we would they should do unto us. But these admirable truths are quite well known and very frequently practised. The difficulty is that our modern world is so complex that none of these elementary and fundamental principles can be applied with any certainty of touch. The suggestion that the leaders of the world do not recognize these principles—whether the arithmetical ones of the multiplication table, or the ethical principle of the Golden Rule—is unfounded. They know them perfectly well but they have not yet

found out how to apply them without error. Moreover, only experts ever will find out. It is ignorance, much more than malice, which hinders achievement; it is not goodwill which is lacking, so much as knowledge.

III

THE APOSTLES

THE founders of the Christian Church were those who went up to Jerusalem and preached about Jesus, not those who merely remembered the teaching which Jesus had given to the multitude. The Church is quite rightly called Apostolic.

Our information about the Apostles is derived partly from the direct statements made in the Gospels and Acts, partly from inferences which can be drawn from the nature of those books.

The Synoptic Gospels and Acts agree in accepting the tradition that Jesus appointed twelve men to spread his teaching, and—either then or later—they, as well perhaps as others, were called Apostles. In his intention their original function was to preach in various towns and villages that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, and to drive out demons from the sick. In other words, they were to extend the work of Jesus. They formed the conclusion that Jesus was the 'Anointed One'—probably the One who should restore the fortunes of Israel. They told him this, but they were strictly commanded not to say so anywhere in public so long as Jesus lived. They went up with Jesus to Jerusalem, ran away for the moment at the time of his arrest and crucifixion, but afterwards returned to Jerusalem in the conviction that their leader had risen from the grave.

They immediately began to preach that he was the 'Anointed One' who was to come to judge the world, so that by this time they had identified him with the 'Anointed One' of the Apocalypses—the Man who would come from Heaven. In his name, therefore, they continued to effect cures, and preached that the way of safety at the Judgement was to repent and accept Jesus.

The result was that instead of the Apostles continuing the teaching of Jesus, they began a new teaching about Jesus. We have two primary sources of information for this early period. (a) The implications of the Gospel of Mark, and (b) the direct statements of the early chapters of Acts—to which the Gospels of Matthew and Luke may be added as representing a second stage.

Mark is almost all narrative. There are only two long sections of teaching. The first, in chapter iv, is a series of parables intended to explain why so few had listened to Jesus and even they had not understood him: it was because he had not wished them to do so. Moreover, it is fairly clear that the point which the public had not seen, and had not been intended to see, was that Jesus was himself the Man from Heaven of Apocalyptic expectation. As a proof of the assertions that this was so the story of Jesus is told so as to bring out the truth. First Jesus himself is told it by a 'Bath Qol' (a voice from Heaven), the typically correct way of receiving a revelation in the days when there was 'no prophet more'. Then

he proves it by his mastery over demons. Then the inner circle of his disciples, especially Peter, guess the truth, and Jesus admits it but enjoins secrecy until after his death and resurrection. Then another 'Bath Qol' repeats the revelation, this time to the disciples, at the Transfiguration. Then Jesus admits to the High Priest that it is the truth. Finally, the Resurrection and the vision of the Risen Jesus are the culminating testimony to the teaching that he was the Anointed One who would come on the clouds of Heaven.

That surely is the obvious meaning of Mark. It is a document drawn up to give the historical proof that the Apostolic preaching was true, that Jesus was the Man who would come from Heaven. He had announced that he would come quickly, and none could know that better than himself, though he said that he did not know the exact moment. He had told them that riches would be a hindrance to their inheriting the World to Come. He had told men to repent. He had warned them that if they allowed anything—foot or hand or eye—to hinder them on the strait and narrow path of righteousness, they were doomed to the everlasting torments of hell, 'where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched'. Therefore let Israel repent and be reconciled with the Judge who was to come.

If we turn to Acts we find almost exactly the same picture. The Apostles are not described as preaching the teaching of Jesus, which is scarcely mentioned, but as reiterating over and over again

their message about Jesus—that he is the Anointed One who will judge the world in righteousness. The additional proof of the truth of their message was that they had received the spirit of God which enabled them to work miracles and to prophesy, for—to quote the classical summary in the Revelation of John—‘the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy’.

If I am right in this elementary attempt to translate the synoptic problem into terms of history it means that the internal evidence of Mark confirms the explicit evidence of the early chapters of Acts—that the Apostolic preaching which began the triumphant career of the Catholic Church was not the teaching of Jesus himself, but the message about Jesus, that he is the divinely appointed Judge and Saviour.

But that is not quite all that we can learn from the synoptic problem. The conflation of Mark and Q is much more than a literary phenomenon: it is the confluence of two currents of history.

Why was the Gospel of Mark not enough? Because others besides the Apostles had listened to the teaching of Jesus. They had not gone up to Jerusalem, they knew little of the death of Jesus, or of his resurrection. They had gone back to their daily life in Galilee, which had never seemed quite the same again, and it had appeared to them that the stories, which they remembered so well and Jesus was so fond of telling, could scarcely have been really

intended to prevent them from understanding his meaning. On the contrary they remembered a great many things that Jesus had done and said which seemed to have a meaning hard to misunderstand. He had surely been a prophet, and he had had marvellous power over devils; but, all the more for this, they had never forgotten his assurance that God cares even for the sparrows and that we have no need to worry about the future. They remembered that Jesus had been angry with the Scribes, who could not tolerate him, and he had warned his enemies of the Man from Heaven who would punish those who did not listen to him: but that was not the way in which he had talked to them. They did not understand much about this mysterious Man from Heaven, but it was a great comfort to believe that God was a good shepherd who took infinite trouble to seek the lambs which had strayed into dangerous places, and that when the trial was held to decide who should inherit the Life to Come the publicans and the harlots who had been sinners because they could not help themselves would pass on into Life, rather than those who had avoided sin and also everything else. And some of those in Galilee, where there were so many Gentiles, remembered that Jesus had once told them that at the Great Assize when the heathen would be judged, the only question which would be important was how they had treated the 'brethren of the King', the poor who had been hungry and thirsty and naked and in prison. So, perhaps, if Gentiles who knew not the

Law could pass on into Life because they had been kind to Jews, there was a chance for Jews who knew the Law, but could not keep it and could not afford constant sacrifices, to inherit the same Life, if they were but kind to others. It was a wonderful thought that God was represented, not by Procurators or Priests or Scribes, but by those who needed kindness.

Some such memories as these must have lived on for many years in Galilee and Syria, and when those who remembered met the Apostolic missionaries and were persuaded that Jesus was indeed the 'Man from Heaven', was himself that King who would sit on the throne of glory and judge the nations, they brought with them the record of what they remembered. Soon this record was incorporated into the message of the missionaries, so that the Gospel of Mark became the Gospel of Matthew and, under somewhat different circumstances and with different treatment, also the Gospel of Luke.

The teaching of Jesus was thus preserved, but at first it was secondary and not primary; not it but the teaching about Jesus—the 'Apostolic' preaching—converted the Gentiles. The 'Son of Man' was not accepted because of his teaching, but the teaching was accepted because it was his. Moreover, the Apostolic preaching was almost immediately transformed by the Gentile world, and soon became something which would have been accepted neither by Jesus nor by the Twelve. It was not only in the conversion of the Gentiles that Paul was a leader, but also in preparing the way for the

transformation of the Apostolic message into the Creed of the Catholic Church.

It is, however, well to summarize what Paul did and did not inherit from his Jewish predecessors, including Jesus and his Apostles. He did inherit a belief that the End was at hand, and that Jesus was the Man who would come to judge the world: he did not inherit any belief that this meant that Jesus was a divine being. He did inherit a belief in the importance of the Law, and neither Jesus nor his disciples are responsible for Paul's change of mind on this subject; for, whereas Jesus differed from other Jews in his interpretation of the Law, Paul differed from them as to its whole function in life.

IV

THE GENTILE WORLD

THE development of religion and of thought had long been quite different in the West from what it had been in the Semitic East. The Prophets and the Scribes in the East had developed a theory of conduct, and their theology had followed; they had 'moralized' the concept of God. The philosophers in the West had developed a theory of reality, and their ethics and theology had followed. It is of course not my intention to discuss Greek philosophy, but merely to indicate a few points which are important for the understanding of Paul and his successors.

In the Graeco-Roman world by the middle of the first century Stoicism was probably the dominant form of thought, though a considerable minority of the most highly educated clung to a modified form of the philosophy of Plato. Plato was a believer in immaterial reality: the Stoics thought that all reality is material. The controversy between them has never been settled and perhaps not often understood. There is no sign that it was an integral factor in Christian thought until the end of the second century. The main contribution of the Stoics was a theory of physics and a theory of ethics. Both spread widely, and were accepted in practice in many circles where they were not understood. There

seems no reason for thinking that Paul had any real knowledge of Stoic ethics. Modern studies have merely shown that he used a terminology which is partly found also in Stoic circles. But people using Greek, and living in the Greek world, could hardly avoid this, and the theory of serious Stoic influence on Pauline thought is an exploded bubble.

But though Stoicism did not affect Paul it had killed the traditional theology of the Roman world. Educated men had no longer any more belief in the gods of their ancestors than they have to-day in the 'heaven and hell' theories of traditional Christianity; and they behaved in the same way. Valuing deeply the literary charm and the social security of an established religion which controlled the uneducated, they endeavoured to give new meaning to old stories and even to old words. Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride* is perhaps the best example of the way it was done, though he is a little later than the time of Paul. The result was that the inherited institutions of religion and of theological thought in the heathen world were a hollow shell. To keep a religion alive—that is to say, to keep the bond which unites successive generations in a consciously connected spiritual experience—it is not necessary to keep opinion unchanged, indeed it is necessary to keep on changing it, but it is imperative that what opinion there is should be honest opinion. That was the difference between the Jews and the heathen. The Jews lost their Temple, their city, and their wealth, but they retained their belief in God and in the Law, and

that was sufficient, because their belief was a really honest one. The Romans a few generations later had similar, though not so great misfortunes, but their theology simply collapsed: it was built on sand. The end was delayed a relatively long time because the upper classes, especially the Roman born—‘*Romani di Roma*’, as they still say—had another and an infinitely more real religion, the cult of Rome¹ and the cult of the Emperors. It can be found—between the lines perhaps, but quite clearly—in the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*; more explicitly, but to my mind less impressively, in the *Carmen Saeculare*; and most magnificently and with final inspiration in Vergil’s marvellous address to his own race—

Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento;
Hae tibi erunt artes: pacisque imponere morem,
Parcere subiectis, et debellare superbos.

These Romans saw a vision, and with all the intensity of real religion lost themselves in its contemplation and service. They saw that the world was harassed and distressed by personal ambition, by lawlessness, by national rivalries. That was the evil of life—the devil which tortured men—and over

¹ In the following pages I have used *Roma dea* more or less as a synonym for ‘the cult of Rome and its Emperors’. In so doing I doubtless exaggerate the importance of the actual *Roma dea*. A full scientific analysis of the subject would point out that what was really ‘the cult of Rome’ was in practice split up into several subdivisions such as the cult of the dead Emperors, the cult of the living Emperor, the Capitoline Triad, and *Roma dea*. In choosing *Roma dea* to represent this complex I gratefully admit that I am following Rudyard Kipling, who seems to me in some of his stories in *Puck of Pook’s Hill* to show more insight into the reality of Imperial Roman religion than most professional scholars.

against it was the vision of a new world, dominated by the service of the State—the *respublica*—by intelligent obedience, and by the recognition of the nations that they owed allegiance to the common superior of them all, *Roma dea*, which was so much more than merely one of the nations. That was a religion—the religion of extraverts—which hoped to redeem civil life; just as Paul's Christianity—a religion of introverts—hoped to redeem individual life.

The strength of such a religion was that it saw a vision of a world set free by *Roma dea* from lawlessness, foolishness, and strife. It did not propose to abolish nationality, but to hold up something divine which should be the common superior of nations. Nations might have their own method of life and make their own rules for their own affairs, have their own religion, philosophy, and art. *Roma dea* cared for none of these things, not because they were unimportant, but because her business was not to meddle with them but to safeguard for others the security, peace, and freedom which they needed.

It was a great vision, even a great religion; it failed because there were not enough men who saw it, and Rome, instead of being the 'common superior' of nations, became merely one of them.

The vision died away; but it was seen again in a rather different form by Augustine in his *Civitas Dei*, and by Hildebrand and the great popes of the Middle Ages. Once more it failed, and for the same reason: the popes were dazzled by the glitter of silver and gold, and by acquiring them lost the

power to say 'Arise and walk'. Again it died away. There was a period for some centuries when few were able to see anything above nationality. That was the spiritual cause of the Great War. Once more it was seen again by a few men, Woodrow Wilson and others, but all that came of it, largely owing to the petty jealousy of little men, was a committee of nations, which cannot be their common superior.

Nevertheless, the end is not yet; it has been a dream, a fancy of my own, that as knowledge—which includes commerce—becomes more and more international, there will some day come a moment when the leaders of this international life will suddenly recognize that they have the real power, that they have become a class which is supra-national, and that what is needed from them is to see that each nation has the opportunity to do well what it can do—develop its resources, its art, its literature—but to insist that they, the business men of the world, are the common superior of nations. Certainly there are men to-day in every country who are seeing visions, to whom 'business' is much more than merely earning a living, however large, and has something of that mystic religious quality which *Roma dea* had for the world of which Augustus laid the foundation and Vergil voiced the inspiration.

But the cult of *Roma dea* was almost exclusively the religion of 'extraverts'.¹ Introverts found their

¹ A critic whose opinion I value thinks I am wrong and believes that all religious persons are introverts, but of different types. Such

needs satisfied in the sacramental cults which flourished in the Graeco-Oriental population of the Empire.

The close study of these cults has been pursued for the last two or three generations by a group of distinguished scholars of whom Franz Cumont and R. Reitzenstein are probably the best known. The difficulty is that we possess so little explanatory material, partly because the cults were secret, partly because Christianity destroyed their monuments. Thus we have only a little literature, mostly allusive rather than descriptive, a fair number of inscriptions, a few pictures or engraved representations, and a very few scraps of liturgies and hymns.

The real clue to their interpretation is given by Christian writers who state that they were demoniacally inspired imitations of Christianity. That of course is merely controversial propaganda, but it shows that the sacramental cults and Christianity were largely parallel movements. We can use one to illustrate the other, but the student of Christianity can do a great deal more to illustrate the other cults than the student of heathenism can to illustrate Christianity. At present the net result of research is approximately this: there was a series of cults in the Roman Empire which offered a happy immortality to their initiates. The method of obtaining this immortality was by means of sacraments in which the initiate repeated the experience of

classifications are in any case doubtful, and I think that my meaning is plain.

the God, especially his death and resurrection or apotheosis.

Now it is true that some students of this subject have run wild in the enthusiasm of discovery and lost sight of the fundamental fact that it has always been known that Catholic Christianity is a sacramental cult, which offers to its initiates the possibility of identifying themselves with the life, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus and so obtaining a happy immortality. That is not anything which requires to be proved. The only obscurity in the subject has been caused by polemical Protestants who do not like to admit that the early Church was Catholic in all these fundamental points of soteriology. The real point which we learn from a study of the other religions is that Christianity was not the only sacramental religion—which is interesting, but scarcely important if the question at issue is the value of sacraments at all.

Thus we come back to the problem of 'the bridge' between the religion of Jesus and primitive Catholicism. For the Catholic it is of course not a problem at all. He believes that the Gospel of John, which is admittedly Catholic and sacramental, represents the teaching of Jesus himself. In my view he is wrong for two reasons:

(1) Comparative examination convinces me that the Gospel of John is a late document which does not give a true account of the work or teaching of Jesus.

(2) A 'sacrament-teaching' Jesus is incredible in

a Jewish setting. The Jews never had any sacraments in the proper sense.

But what of Paul? That is the question which will call for discussion in the next chapter.

PART II

PAUL

V

PAUL AND THE JEWS

PLACED in a world of differing opinions, emotionally high-strung and intellectually intensely active, Paul was certain to take sides warmly.

At first he was strongly Jewish. By education he belonged to the Pharisees. He therefore obviously believed in the Law; but the view that he ascribed supreme efficacy to it probably requires more consideration than is usually given to it, for it raises, and yet indicates the solution of, a very difficult problem which has been seen from opposite angles by such very different scholars as Oort and Van Manen in Holland and by Montefiore in England.

Judged by any impartial investigator of Judaism, Paul's attitude in the Epistle to the Romans is bitterly unfair. In that Epistle, and in Galatians, he is clearly contending against those who think that they can become righteous by observing the Law, and argue that they will be damned utterly if they fail in any point. But who in real life seriously thought so? Any one who troubles to read the Old Testament and Jewish literature generally will recognize at once that the chief characteristic of Judaism was and is that it provides in the Law, not only a complete code of perfect conduct, but also a means of constant reinstatement for all who fall by

the way; that means is repentance. 'When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive', said Ezekiel. And the rabbis taught that one moment of repentance will secure the life of the World to Come just as surely as a long life of good deeds.¹ In this respect they and Jesus agreed (see p. 46).

How then did Paul come so to misrepresent the religion of his own people? The Dutch school argued that he cannot have done so, and that the Epistles must be forgeries, written by Christians of the second century, who understood nothing of Judaism. The objection to that theory is that it raises more problems than it solves. It is possible (and even probable) that Colossians and Ephesians as well as the Pastoral Epistles are the work of a later generation; but Romans, Galatians, and Corinthians are unintelligible as products of the second century, when the Judaistic controversy, if not dead, was at least moribund.

Montefiore has shown the problem very clearly in his *Judaism and Paul*—a book which should be read and re-read by any one who tries to see the problems of the first century. His solution is that there may have been variations of Judaism in the Diaspora of which we know nothing. That is

¹ It may be objected by some that this makes salvation too easy. Does it? Is it so easy to repent? Let those who make the objection read the scene in *Hamlet* where the King agonizes to repent, and cannot. This scene is often omitted on the stage, to the great disadvantage of the play; it is really central.

probably true, and I would venture to elaborate the point. As was pointed out on p. 37, there was in the Diaspora a type of liberal Judaism which allegorized the Law, so that ritual and ceremonial ordinances became ethical and spiritual precepts. Such teaching must have been particularly obnoxious to Sadducees and Pharisees alike; for in all generations the professional ecclesiastic thinks that the abandonment of taboos in favour of ethical principles is in some mysterious way an immoral act.

It may well be surmised that Paul in his youthful days had a strong dislike of liberalism, and on the other hand that the Christian circle of Stephen and the Seven, whose names suggest that they were all 'Hellenists', was not a little imbued with it. Is it impossible, or even improbable, that in controversy against this movement Paul had gone farther than ordinary Pharisaic teaching in claiming 'the Law, the whole Law, and nothing but the Law' as the one necessary and perfect guide of Life and source of righteousness? Surely it is clear that in Romans Paul is not so much replying to Jewish teachers as answering and rejecting statements with which he had once tried to satisfy himself, though it may be suspected that in truth he had never been quite happy with them. He had a passion for righteousness: but my own belief is that it comforted him very little to be assured that repentance would enable him to pass into the World to Come. He may well have accepted the assurance; but he did not enjoy the feeling that he was a miserable sinner.

Nor is this strange: only those to whom repentance is a theologoumenon, not an experience, can really confess their sins with the complacency which we are accustomed to see. Paul suffered under the strain of alternately sinning against his will and of agonizing in repentance. The only escape was to observe the Law, always and perfectly. In his Jewish days, in spite of frequent failure, he believed that this was possible, though even then he was not seeking salvation, but righteousness; but when he had become a Christian he felt the impossibility of righteousness by the Law, and argued fiercely against the position he had once held.

It is clear that we have to deal with a mixture of experience and expression. One of the main difficulties of all study of religion is this inevitably recurring confusion. No means has yet been found of, as it were, filtering out expression so that we shall have a residuum of pure experience. All that we can do is to express the experience in a variety of ways, and try to eliminate or to allow for such parts of our expression as are clearly due to ourselves and not to the experience. Not only is it all that we can do, but no one has yet done even that very successfully. The usual mistake is to think that by changing Paul's expression into our own, or, still worse, into an unhappy mixture of his and ours, we have somehow transmuted theology into religion, whereas in reality we have only substituted one set of words for another. Nevertheless, there is something to be gained by this process, especially if we recognize its

limitations, inasmuch as our own expression is more likely to be intelligible than any other form, and comes to us with no deceptive glamour of great names and ancient authority. The harmfulness of retaining a worn-out form of expression is that it is inefficient, because without elaborate explanation it is unintelligible to all except experts. These know that it is intellectually untrue,¹ and attempt to put a new, different, and truer meaning into old words. They sometimes succeed, but at the expense of making old documents meaningless; more often they fail, and merely reduce a perfectly intelligible document, such as the Creed of Nicaea, to a combination of platitude and absurdity which would have called down the strongest anathema, not only of the three hundred and eighteen holy fathers, but of Arius as well.

Therefore, though I recognize fully that I shall merely add to the number of re-expressions, I propose to discuss both Paul's experiences and his expression of them. I shall attempt to show how far analogous experiences can be traced, and how far Paul's expression is due to concepts of his own time which we have abandoned for every purpose except theological statement, and would do far better to abandon for that also.

Let me begin by trying to state very briefly and

¹ I say 'intellectually' untrue, because it is the fashion; but I cannot see how truth can be anything not intellectual. 'Emotionally true' and similar phrases are misplaced metaphors, or an abuse of language. They represent a confused perception of spiritual relationship combined with intellectual difference.

to discuss the main points—not the details—of Paul's theology, always keeping in view the desire to understand the experience behind this theology rather than to construct a consistent system of theologoumena.

Paul shared with his Jewish contemporaries a belief that there is one eternal God who created the world, and—what is more important—created 'right' and 'wrong' by decree. On these points Paul would have met much opposition from his Greek contemporaries, and in general their objections would be reiterated to-day, if the original meaning¹ of the Epistles were retained. A Greek would have denied that 'matter' was certainly created by a god. Some Greeks thought one way, some another, but all educated ones recognized that the source of matter is a problem, not a datum, and so it remains to-day, for on this point we are exactly where we were. That matter had a beginning and that this beginning was due to a pre-existent being who had no beginning is the opinion of certain early theologians and the foundation of orthodox thought; but it cannot be proved and is perhaps not even probable. Moreover, few Greeks would have admitted that right and wrong owed their existence to the decree of a divine being. They are inherent in the nature of things. Not even the gods can make right what is wrong and wrong

¹ Once more I make use of conventional language; but really a document has no meaning except its original one, and Paul's theology ought not be given any meaning except his. We may use the same words differently, in a way more agreeable to ourselves, but then it is our own meaning, not Paul's.

THE GOD OF THE JEWS

what is right. This is a long way from the Jewish belief of Paul, so richly illustrated in Romans ix-xi, that what God does *is* right, because he does it.

Paul, being a Jew, also unhesitatingly accepted the story of the Creation, in Genesis, as literal history. He held that man was the specific creation of God; that God had intended him to be immortal, righteous, and happy, and that man had disobeyed and been punished by being made mortal, sinful, and miserable. Man's nature had become such that he could not keep the rules of life which God had given him, but (and it is here that Paul diverges from Judaism) God in his mercy had sent his son¹ to redeem men, and give them the spirit, so that they too became 'Sons of God'. They became a 'new creation' by the gift of the spirit, just as the first man had been given life when God breathed into him.

Thus Paul's teaching differed seriously both from orthodox Judaism and from the teaching of Jesus.² Judaism (and in this respect Jesus was entirely Jewish) taught that all men—especially Israelites—are the children of God. They are very naughty children, and constantly do wrong; but, if they are sorry and try again, God is a loving father who helps them. Ultimately all good children will go on

¹ In what sense Paul used the word 'son' I do not know. In Jewish thought 'Son of God' may mean an 'angel', or it may mean 'a righteous man'. If Colossians be genuine Paul may have shared Philo's belief in a Logos, but I doubt it.

² A few passages in the Synoptic Gospels, especially in Luke, might be interpreted in a Pauline sense; but I see nothing to suggest that Jesus intended this.

to the World to Come, where it will be easy to be good, and there will be no more sin or suffering. Whether any particular Child of God has been good enough, or has tried hard enough, to inherit the Life to Come, is God's business, and he will settle that question at the end of the Age.

It is a very beautiful, touching belief, and the God of the Jews and of Jesus is a very beautiful figure—much more beautiful than the God of Paul. But for us, as for educated Greeks of the first century, it is a beautiful picture which we cannot fully accept. Nevertheless, it expresses a reality of experience which is still ours, though we put it in different words and paint a different picture of it. It represents the invincible sense of present failure and future success which animates and has always animated the best men. We sin, we suffer, we fall, but we get up again, we go on, because we see the unscaled heights, and we know that some day we or our children will reach them. To possess that experience is one side of religion, to express it is one side of theology. It is better for your intellectual sincerity if you know that your expression is imperfect and metaphorical, and that the visions are visions and not diagrams. But one of the essentials in life is to see these visions and to show them to others.¹

¹ That is the true object of all education, as distinct from information. No one long remembers facts, but they do not forget visions, and though facts rule us, visions rule facts.

VI

PAUL AND REGENERATION

THE vision of Paul differed from that of Jesus.¹ He retained, it is true, the Jewish belief in the Age to Come and in a future judgement, and an essential result of being righteous was to secure admission to the World to Come. Yet this was secondary, not primary, for he valued righteousness for its own sake and not for its results. The 'way of failure' described above was too hard for him, and he desired some miracle of regeneration which would set him free from constantly recurring sin. He longed for a change of nature. In that he was not alone, then or now, and some discussion of the point is a necessary parenthesis.

I said just now that for most men life is an alternation of success and failure, and that we are sustained by the belief that in spite of constant slips and tumbles, we nevertheless are climbing and not falling. That belief is sound, and is based on the fundamental nature of the universe. We are able to climb because of two factors: first, the universe is not malignantly hostile, but passively beneficent; secondly, we have the power in ourselves to rise above disaster.

But the second point is not true of every one.

¹ 'Jesus was a Pelagian, Paul an Augustinian.' The epigram must be taken *cum grano salis*, but it has an element of truth.

There is a large class of men, and probably even larger of women, who are permanently dissatisfied with life. They are aware of failure but not of success, and this consciousness bears no relation at all to concrete results as others see them. They wish they could be 'made different', 'experience a change of nature', 'be regenerated'—the phrases all mean the same thing. Moreover, they often succeed in attaining their wish. Something happens, and from that moment they are changed beings, and the failures of their life—which to the outward observer are just as obvious as ever—slide off them unfelt and un lamented. They express this change in the language of whatever theory they adopt to explain it, and they generally regard the result as a consequence of their holding that particular theory. Such persons existed in large numbers in the first century. In the Graeco-Oriental world they were especially numerous, but less so in Roman¹ or Jewish circles. They gave strength to the growth of sacramental religion, of which Catholic Christianity was the ultimate and the best-known survivor. The extent of the influence which they had on the evolution of Christianity is open to discussion, but undoubtedly the original strength of all the sacramental cults was that they offered a change of nature to those who desired it.

The difficulty in any intelligent discussion of this

¹ At least I think so; but I do not know that I could prove it. My judgement is based on lack of evidence to the contrary, which is an unsafe criterion.

subject is due to our tendency to forget the distinction between the experience of the changed person and the cause to which he attributes the change. The change is real; the cause alleged for it may be a figment of his imagination, and yet, for him, a necessary part of the process. Initiates into the cults of Isis, of Mithras, or of Christ were all equally certain that the change they experienced was due to their own Lord, and it is to be noted that their successors in modern cults are also invariably certain that they have gained peace of mind through their own peculiar system. Moreover, they certainly have; the only question is whether other cults, had they believed in them, would not have done just as well. For many persons it is the fact of belief, not the content of it,¹ which brings help. This, however, is not the main point for the present purpose; the far more important thing is that Paul lost his sense of unrighteousness and misery when he became a Christian, and preached Christianity as the religion which could give this result.

The late Prof. William James once made popular the name 'sick soul' for persons who felt miserable in the way that Paul did, and 'twice-born' for those who like Paul found a sudden and permanent escape from their misery.

Possibly William James, and certainly others,²

¹ Not that the 'content' is immaterial. It need not be true, but it must be credible, i.e. credible to the patient.

² Such as myself in *The Stewardship of Faith* (London: Christophers).

went too far in thinking that all great men pass through this experience, and that the 'twice-born' man is necessarily better than the 'once-born' man. The truth seems to me to be that it is very good for a sick soul to become twice-born, and so recover from his troubles. Many great men have done so. But it is never a good thing to be ill, and certainly not to be a chronic invalid, and an equal number of great men have never been chronic invalids. Nor is it true that the 'twice-born' has a knowledge which the healthy minded cannot understand. That might be true if the antithesis were between unbroken healthy happiness and unbroken sick misery. But it is not; there can be very few who have escaped the sick misery all their lives. The point is that most of us have short attacks from which we recover, never become chronic invalids, and need no radical operation to change us.

Nevertheless, it remains true that there are not a few chronic invalids for whom to attain health is the most important thing in the world. They are quite right for themselves, but err when they go about trying to infect others with a sense of illness merely to produce the need of a cure.¹

However this may be, Paul was certainly a 'sick soul' and found a cure in Christianity. There

¹ A really terrible illustration of the extreme to which this used to be done in some Methodist circles is given in Gosse's *Father and Son*. The exact parallel in physical health can be found in those unlucky people who think they are neglecting their health if they never have an illness.

are two main problems to be discussed in this connexion:

1. What was Paul's own experience after his conversion?
2. How did he explain it?

It will be easier to take up the second first.

Paul's own explanation was 'henceforth it is no longer I that live but Christ in me'. He means this literally, not metaphorically; for no one can read the Epistles without seeing that Paul does not confuse metaphor with reality. He had an experience which cured the sickness of his soul, and he interpreted it as due to the fact that Christ was actually living in him—not of course the human body of Jesus, but the spirit which was the risen, glorified Lord.

Once more this calls for a rather long and important parenthesis to show that this belief was as natural in Paul's time as it would be bizarre in ours.

Paul lived in a world which was full of 'spirits'. Some were angels, some were demons. The theory was not fully thought out, and the relations of these 'spirits' to the 'spirit of God' and to the Devil were never clearly expressed.¹ One thing, however, is plain. The demons were the ghosts of wicked men. This is explicitly stated by Josephus and is the background of such books as *Enoch* and *Jubilees*. The demons always looked back on their human existence with regret, and desired to return to it on all

¹ See Additional Note ix in vol. v of my *Beginnings of Christianity* (Macmillan).

possible occasions. These occasions were offered by such persons as by accidental imprudence allowed the demons to enter their bodies. Once a demon was inside he amused himself by making the unfortunate body which he obsessed do wicked and painful things. Sin and suffering were caused by demons who enjoyed them.

Good spirits operated in exactly the same manner, but being good spirits, and not evil ones, did good instead of harm. The most significant illustration of this was afforded by the prophets; the spirit of the Lord entered into them and spoke through them in just the same way as an evil spirit entered into and spoke through a demoniac.

This belief in good and bad spirits is a most important part in the background both of Jesus and of Paul. The Gospel of Mark represents the fight against demons, especially those who caused disease, as one of the chief functions of Jesus. It says less about good spirits, and does not belong to the later stage of Christianity in which the Gift of the Spirit was essential. Jesus did not teach that men needed the Gift of the Spirit in order to inherit life. To do that repentance and right conduct were the essentials. But he claimed that he was himself inspired by the spirit which he received at his baptism, and he promised his disciples that when they were in bitter need the spirit would help them.¹

Similarly Paul was sure that he was inspired, and

¹ Mark knows nothing about the Gift of the Spirit at Pentecost, or any general and permanent inspiration of the Apostles.

that this inspiration was the source of his changed nature. He is far from explicit as to the relation of the spirit either to God, or to Jesus. Probably he never asked the question, but I think that he felt sure of two points: (i) the spirit was Christ the Lord; (ii) it was sent by God.

How was it possible that Christ could be a spirit? This question is inevitably asked by those who have been brought up on the tradition of Luke and John, which represents the risen Jesus as a being of flesh and blood. The answer is that Paul did not have this opinion. In the first letter to the Corinthians he explicitly states that flesh and blood¹ cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, from which he certainly did not mean to exclude Jesus. Moreover, he goes on to say that at the End, when the dead rise, we shall be changed, and shall have 'spirit bodies²' instead of 'animal³ bodies'. As he based his own contention that this kind of resurrection will really take place on the precedent of Christ's resurrection, it is clear that he thought thus of Christ's resurrection.⁴

He therefore had no difficulty in regarding the spirit which possessed him (and he *knew* that he was inspired) as identical with the risen Jesus. Our difficulties are due to the general theory, which to

¹ The explanation that 'flesh and blood' merely means 'sinful nature' is not rendered less absurd by repetition.

² A body (σῶμα) is not necessarily flesh.

³ ψυχή = anima, ψυχικόν = animale.

⁴ I have elaborated this argument in detail in my *Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus* (London: Williams & Norgate; New York: Putnams).

us seems incredible; but none of these troubled Paul or his contemporaries, who believed in good and bad spirits as naturally as we disbelieve in them. The result of being possessed by the spirit (Jesus) was that Paul's life of unrighteousness and misery was over. Henceforward he felt happy and righteous.

Once more these words 'happy and righteous' require further consideration.

Happiness is a state of mind. It is certainly not inconsistent with discomfort, or even with pain. It is very hard to define it positively, but it is not identical with pleasure, or with joy, both of which may even end in unhappiness. One might say that it is a condition of satisfaction with the state in which we are, or better, perhaps, with the direction in which we are trying to go—if it were possible to eliminate the element of smugness in the word 'satisfaction'. The martyr is happy in his sufferings, though unless his physical nature be deeply perverted he cannot find pleasure in them; on the other hand, the great achievement of the past century, especially in America, has been to give more comfort and pleasure to more persons than has ever been given before, and yet it is doubtful whether this has affected their happiness, except in so far as comfort makes happiness or unhappiness more perceptible than it would otherwise be.

In this sense, then, Paul achieved happiness—not pleasure or comfort.

He also became righteous; but what exactly does

righteousness mean? The traditional definition of righteousness is 'being in the right relation to God'. Probably Paul would have accepted this as a fair statement. Moreover, to him it was clear that this righteousness, which he obtained through the spirit (Jesus), was the cause of his happiness. He felt, he knew, that he was righteous; therefore he was happy.

A modern psychologist might reverse the statement and say that he felt righteous because he was happy, but Paul would have failed to understand this, and would have violently repudiated any such language.

The difficulty of seeing straight in this matter is a fundamental difference of ideas. Paul thought of righteousness as a relation to God. God had created the difference between right and wrong. To do wrong was specifically to do what God had ruled out, and to be a sinner was to be a person whom God would not accept. To understand Paul it is necessary to accept his definitions, and to do that it is advisable first to have some of our own.

It is hard to define what we mean by right and wrong. In the first place, I at least do not mean the result of any decree of God or man. I do not believe in the existence of any creator, and when I use the word God, I mean the totality of values, not a person, or a 'personal being' who created values, which are eternal and neither created nor derived.

We live in a world made up of 'happenings', or 'phenomena', and 'values'. Both are real, but

'happenings' are material and 'values' are immaterial. The two classes are always distinct but never separate. More and more the spiritual life of man is consciously directed towards this immaterial sphere of 'values'. To see them as well as may be, and to serve them so far as we can, is the 'good' life. To serve 'phenomena' to the exclusion of 'values' is the 'bad' life. Ultimately those who follow the 'good' life will develop some form of organized co-operation. The Church might provide it, but at present it is prevented from doing so by its attachment to the words (rather than to the meaning) of an obsolete theology, which alienates those who value truth and seek its intelligible statement.

How many educated men really think differently? Surely very few; it is only a question whether, in the face of ecclesiastical and uneducated assertions that the word God *must* mean 'a being' or 'a personal being', it will be desirable¹ to go on using the word in our non-personal sense. It does not really matter, for—except for homiletic purposes—it is just as easy to say 'totality of values' as to say 'God'. The only point to be remembered is that most of the rising generation in the universities has already decided that it agrees with us, and if it finds that the Church is staking its position on a belief which cannot be accepted—*videat ecclesia*.

If, then, we cannot express right and wrong as

¹ I argued in favour of the use of the word 'God' as meaning the 'totality of values' or 'immaterial reality' in my *Religion of Yesterday and To-morrow*, but the friendly criticisms of Mr. Walter Lippman have gone far to persuade me that this usage is confusing.

relationship to a personal God, how can we do it? Probably we adopt, consciously or unconsciously, a biological rather than a theological definition.

Right is whatever makes for life and for higher life; wrong is whatever destroys life or degrades it. Of course by 'life' is not intended merely the individual existence; the definition leaves room both for the death of the martyr and for the execution of the criminal. There is in addition the difficulty of saying exactly what we mean by 'elevating' or 'degrading' life, but the difficulty is in definition rather than in comprehension.

The practical consequence, which the rising generation has already seen, is that right and wrong are not fixed by decree any more or any less than any other biological factors. They are not given us by revelation, we know very little about them, but they are open to discovery by observation and experiment.

It follows from this that we think that we are not, and cannot be, 'good' or 'bad', but only 'better' or 'worse'. But Paul thought that he could be 'righteous' because God, who settled the question, said so. For him it was a question of status by decree; for us it is a question of movement in a definite direction.

The net result of these remarks is to show that we cannot accept Paul's own explanation of the change which his nature underwent. We do not believe in a God who decrees the difference between right and wrong; on the contrary right and wrong are characteristics of life as it moves in one direction or

another, and the origin of life is for us a problem to which we have not the solution.¹ We do not believe in a world of spirits, good or bad, and it is illogical to reject the whole theory of demons as the source of sin and suffering, but cling to a belief in a good spirit as the source of happiness or regeneration.

Nevertheless, the solid fact of Paul's experience remains. It is not unique, and if we reject his explanation, we are all the more obliged to discuss, and if possible to understand, the experience, which resolves itself into his belief that he was 'possessed' by the Lord Jesus, and his sense that he was 'a new creature'. These may be called his 'inspiration' and his 'mysticism'.

¹ Few things are more silly than to continue to preach that we know the source of life and the origin of the universe, to a generation which is taught in every school and college that this is just what no one knows. It is so obvious that such assertions cannot be proved that we lose intellectual caste, and after that are not believed on any subject.

VII

INSPIRATION AND MYSTICISM

THROUGHOUT the course of history there has been a constant succession of men and women who have either continuously, or more often at intervals, felt that their thoughts, words, and actions were not in their own control, but were guided by some power stronger than themselves. Sometimes this power leads them to do or say things which they themselves do not recognize as their own. They seem to be watching their own actions, or listening to their own words. At the moment of exaltation and even after it they often marvel at what they have done or said. The rest of the world generally condemns it, but after some interval opinion is occasionally reversed, and the conduct or thought first revealed by inspiration becomes the standard generally accepted.

This is inspiration 'at the good end'; but there is also inspiration 'at the bad end', though our generation has usually forgotten the fact or prefers to use different words for the two ends.

The ancient world did not do this. Both the Old and the New Testaments recognize the existence of bad as well as good inspiration. Men can be inspired to acts and words of the most horrible kind, and the Biblical writers explained this as due to the action of the wrong kind of spirit. According to

them the world is full of evil spirits, who inspire men for evil in just the same way as the Holy Spirit of God inspires them for good.

How do we stand on this matter? That the world is full of spirits, good or bad, is a theory which, if not universally abandoned, has far fewer friends than formerly. 'Spirits' are not seriously considered by most psychologists as a probable explanation of the facts of experience. But the experience itself, the experience of inspiration, good and bad, is just as frequent as ever.

We recognize it in two forms:

(a) There is the inspiration for evil of the criminal who cannot resist an invincible power which drives him to actions of the worst kind. He is a different type from criminals caught in the 'gin of circumstances', or misled by an intelligent but inaccurate calculation of the possibilities of profit in a career of crime. The man who is a criminal by inspiration is increasingly recognized as pathological. He is not the less dangerous, but his case has to be dealt with differently, and, though it is at present impossible in practice, in theory criminals should be dealt with by considering not so much their overt acts as their psychological type. A grown man with an habitual desire to inflict pain is potentially a greater social danger than the man who is maddened by some exceptional circumstances which are not likely to recur and kills another human being, and the two cases ought to be treated in a wholly different way.

How do we explain the pathological¹ criminal? Apart from cases where actual physical causes can be detected, the most probable explanation is that he is a 'throw back'. The life of the individual repeats the history of the race, and if development cease too soon, the individual may, either in all, or—and this is the more dangerous possibility because more difficult to detect—in some ways,² throw back to the cruel, lustful beings from whom we have been evolved.

Instead of saying that the criminal man is inspired by a demon, we should say that he is a survival. He is, as it were, the ghost of an evil past who has come to trouble us.

(b) But there is also inspiration for good.

In every age there have been men who have attacked the fabric of society and the conduct of individuals just as vehemently as any criminal, under an impulse just as irresistible. Literally and metaphorically they have usually been stoned; but in many cases their cry of appeal to the future has been heard, and they are now revered and worshipped as the messengers of God and the saviours of mankind. You cannot explain bad inspiration biologically and good inspiration theologically. Nor is it necessary; for, just as certainly as we repeat in ourselves the

¹ Of course I do not include the quite different, but superficially similar, case of criminals who are suffering from endocrine or other disease.

² I must excuse myself from discussing the difficult problem of the relation of 'throw backs' to 'degenerates'. They seem to me related but not identical phenomena.

history of the race, so we have also in ourselves the latent seeds of the future.

Society, which is based on the consent of the average and normal, has always been even more intolerant of the future than of the past, nor is it able to distinguish between them. It always has and it always must segregate or slay both demoniacs and prophets, survivals from the past and forerunners of the future. It seems a tragedy for the prophets; but the prophets themselves have not thought so. 'Weep not for me, weep for yourselves', said one of them, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. No! you can kill a prophet, and you can torture a prophet, but it is hard to make a prophet unhappy.

Well, then, what are we to do? I fear we shall go on doing much the same as our ancestors, though doubtless with improved and more humanitarian methods. We shall—ultimately—abandon the grosser forms of torture. But we shall not tolerate prophets any better than our ancestors did. We cannot: partly because our nature prevents it; partly because the fact of inspiration is not a proof of correctness, still less of practical possibility in the teaching of the prophet.

As I see it, the problem is this: we have among us a certain number of persons who belong to the future rather than the present. That does not mean that they are infallible; and when they are taken in the strong grip of the future, and speak or act under

some compulsion which does not come from their normal selves, they may be talking nonsense, or they may be uttering words of the utmost value. How can we tell?

We have but one guide—reason. As we use it, it also is not infallible, but it is the best guide we have, and the source of its fallibility is not in itself, but in the persons who use it. The multiplication table is not to be impugned because we make mistakes in arithmetic. Reason is our guide in life.

But there is little or no driving power in reason, just as there is little or no steering power in inspiration. As usual life is a problem in unstable equilibrium; if it is all reason we shall never move, if it is all inspiration we shall run on to the rocks. If an automobile has an engine but no steering-wheel it will have a rapid but disastrous career; if it has a steering-wheel but no engine it will stay safely but unprofitably still.

Listen to the prophets; but test what they say by reason and intelligence—only see that it *is* reason and not authority, intelligence and not tradition.

To the same cause as his inspiration, that is to the Spirit of Jesus, Paul ascribed his sense that he had achieved a higher unity—a union with God, with Christ, and with Christians. He was united with them all, whereas formerly he had been alienated and separated. The spirit of Jesus was in him, and in others, and it united them all to itself and to one another. This is often called Paul's mysticism.

Obviously we have again to deal with experience on the one hand, and expression or explanation on the other. The experience of unity is one thing, its explanation is another.

Let me begin with the experience. If I am not wholly wrong, the essential in all mysticism is the attainment of a consciousness of peace and unity. To my mind, it is the very heart of personal religion, even though I admit that many have claimed to be religious without it, and a few who have enjoyed it and found it the one important thing in life have not called it religion.¹ Nearly all the leaders of religion have been mystics; they have exhausted language and metaphor in the attempt to expound the value of the mystic experience, and the tragedy of Church history is that their successors, who frequently were not mystics, emphasized the language, regarded the metaphor as description, and ended by changing mysticism into mythology.

A very common form of mysticism is often not recognized. It is the sense which the worker obtains that he and his work are one. As a rule we are conscious of our work as external. It is strictly the 'object' of attention. But there comes a moment when somehow the worker and his work fuse into a common consciousness. It is as though the work is itself solving its own problem, and the sense of

¹ Almost always, I think, because religion had been so presented to them that it seemed to be a hateful combination of convention in conduct and credulity in thought.

'object' and 'subject' is lost. Is that experience to be trusted? It is impossible to answer; it may be suggested that it is a form of intoxication, produced by the stress of work. No one can prove that that is not so: but as a personal experience I have no doubt that under it has been produced the best work that I have ever done. Can that be illusion or intoxication?

Less common but more often discussed is the mysticism of the artist. Wordsworth, Shelley, and Browning have all agonized to express their sense that at times the beauty of nature has opened the prison-house of individuality so that they passed into—not unconsciousness—but a higher consciousness of the world in which we live, not as onlookers, but as sharing in the self-consciousness of nature.

A more common, but also more often fallacious, form of mysticism is found in the relation between two human beings. At its best, which is fortunately not rare, it means that two persons, suddenly or gradually, attain the feeling that between them the barrier of individuality is lifted. On one side of their nature they are one and not two. The barrier may fall again—indeed it probably will—but not permanently. That is part of the phenomenon which we generally call love. It is, I suppose, by far the most common form of mysticism, but any study of it is confused and liable to be deceptive, because it is combined with the purely physical phenomena of sex, which have nothing to do with it. Only expert psychologists are capable of really advancing our

knowledge of this subject, but a few general points may be made.

I disbelieve the theory that this whole phenomenon is sexual, because it is almost if not quite as frequent among persons of the same sex as among those of opposite ones, and it is absurd to say that in all these cases it is due to the pathological phenomenon of homosexuality. I also disbelieve it because sexual desire is an appetite; when satisfied it dies down; when indulged to excess it ends in revulsion. In that respect it is exactly like our appetite for eating. When you are hungry, you wish to eat, and your desire for 'something nice' is unusually strong. Most of us experience this desire about three times a day. A relatively small indulgence satisfies that desire, and we 'do not want any more'. An excessive indulgence produces the result 'I cannot stand even the look of it'. That is a purely physical phenomenon, and the sexual appetite works in just the same way, except that it recurs at longer intervals, that its regular indulgence is not necessary to life, that it is not always necessary to health, and that it varies with individuals even more than does food-appetite. But the 'raising of the barriers' is neither a result nor a cause of sexual desire. This may be present simultaneously or it may not. The latter is, I believe, the more common.

Higher, more intense, and rarer is the final form of mysticism, which like all the others is a raising of the barriers, but not between us and our work, or the beauty of nature, or some other person, but between

us and all reality. It is an experience that some of the saints had, and some of the philosophers. Paul clearly had it to a high degree.

Such is what I at least mean by mysticism, but a few more observations concerning it may not be out of place.

In the first place, the 'raising of the barriers of individuality' does not mean any confusion of physical or mental perception. Two persons who have reached the experience of unity still have separate vision and the one with the better eyes will see more than the other; and they still have separate brains so that they can and do reason separately, but—I know no other word to express it—they 'perceive' as a unit. What they perceive, and the intellectual conclusions based on it, may be judged differently by their two brains. The question once more is whether this is illusion—intoxication—or a genuine fact of experience. Personally, I believe that it is a genuine fact, but I cannot think of any test which will prove the matter to those who think otherwise.

The truth is that we drown at this stage in a sea of metaphysical difficulty. Let us take an analogous problem. If I look out of my window I see a patch of 'green grass'. Why 'green'? Every one would agree that it *is* green, but what is that, and why? Try to explain it to a man who was born blind. It is impossible to do so. Nevertheless, he can easily understand two cognate things:

(a) He can comprehend a 'vibration-theory' of

light, and understand that certain nerves, which he happens not to have, are sensitive to certain vibrations. He can distinguish their length by words such as 'red', 'green', etc., just as he distinguishes the length of other vibrations, affecting the auditory nerves which he does possess, by other words such as 'treble' and 'bass'. In one case he and we have the same sensory experience, and not in the other. Would he be justified in saying that the experience which I have when I say that I see 'green' is unreal? I could not meet his contention, but I should doubt it. He cannot see what I mean, because he is blind.

(b) Alternatively, he can obtain an approximation to sight by comparing it to something which has a similar emotional value. There is, for instance, the classic example of the blind man who listened to a long description of the colour red, and then said that he now understood; 'red is the sound of a trumpet'. Of course to some people that seems silly; to others obvious. To those whose senses are interrelated so that certain sounds (and even certain persons) always connote certain colours, it is obvious. But, of course, that does not mean that 'seeing a colour' is identical with 'hearing a sound'. Things which produce the same emotion are not necessarily the same.

The point, then, which I wish to make is this. I cannot prove that there is in reality a 'colour', 'green'. I know that I experience the colour 'green', and because most people constantly have that experience few except professional metaphysicians realize

how doubtful and difficult a problem this is. Perhaps it is an illusion, an intoxication if you prefer the word. But it is just the same with mysticism: I cannot prove that the experience of the 'raised barriers' is real, if you question it. I may be drunk: or you may be blind. I propose to assume neither alternative except when choice is imperative, but then I shall take for myself the benefit of the doubt.

How is the mystic experience acquired? The answer is that it is not, it comes—sometimes, to some people. The surest way of missing it is to seek it. We go on our way through life, and that way seems to be irretrievably bounded and shut in by the walls of individuality. On the other side of the wall, we can hear sounds which show that it is not empty space. But we cannot pass through the wall. And then one day the wall changes, it becomes a door—to change the metaphor, the barrier is lifted—and for a time we can pass through into a wider and a better land. Or, to put the matter more directly, I think that those who say to themselves 'we will be mystics' are doomed to disappointment and failure. To those who do not seek it, but strive rather to do their ordinary work as well as they can and as much as they can, the experience may come. That is the element of truth in sacramental doctrine, but the Church has not sufficiently recognized that all life is potentially sacramental, and that it is impossible to pick out parts of it or moments in it and say that those are Sacraments and others are not.

One other point is noteworthy. The mystical experience is often, though not always, accompanied by emotion; and the practice of some religious communities suggests that they hold the theory that by creating emotional exaltation you can induce the mystical experience. The Church has always been quick to recognize this as a mistake in heretics or in heathen—Montanists or Mohammedans—but it has not seen that it does the same thing by the sensuous appeal of music, incense, and the rhythmical repetition of impressive words. These things cannot fail frequently to arouse emotion, and very often that emotion passes for religious or mystical experience. It is, of course, difficult to judge correctly; but I do not believe that it is possible in this way to reverse the current, and, instead of allowing religious or mystical experience to produce emotion, to try by emotion to produce mysticism.

In Catholicism this error has usually been covered by the fact that for the Catholic the Sacraments are not merely means of religious experience, but are the divinely appointed channels of 'grace'. They are the gift of a supernatural being who gives help to men if they go through these services and not otherwise. But in liberal Protestant churches the error of 'induced experience'—due to emotional exaltation—is at present peculiarly common. These churches have, as a rule, abandoned the whole theory of sacramental grace, and, which is the real tragedy, have also abandoned their own noble heritage—clear thought, lucid utterance, and fearless leadership—in favour of a

deliberate attempt to satisfy a desire for emotional excitement which sanctifies itself by the claim that it is religion. *Corruptio optimi pessima*, and this perversion of Protestantism, which is filling its pulpits with men who have no special knowledge of any special thing, but are moderately skilful in the art of moderately emotional utterance, is destroying Protestant Christianity more rapidly than anything else.

PART III
THE LEGACY

VIII

THEOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES

IN the widest sense, Paul's heirs were all the members of Catholic Christianity. Like other heirs, they did not merely accept their heritage, but modified it. Nor was their succession undisputed. The nucleus of nascent Christianity was surrounded by a ring of aberrant forms of thought and practice shading off into one another and finally losing themselves in the syncretistic religions of the Roman Empire. Controversy between these forms gradually forced definition on them; the stronger ostracized the weaker, and developed into the Catholic Church, though the elimination of rival presentations and organizations was not completed until the strong arm of the State in the fourth and fifth centuries gave authority to the decisions of the Spirit in the Councils of the Church.

The development of Christianity during this time—the second generation—is necessarily obscure, and our knowledge of the period between 50 and 170 A.D. is limited and inaccurate. I do not propose to discuss any of the details of the question, but to confine myself to indicating some of the features of still living importance which gradually changed the heritage left by Paul to that which the Church of the third century passed on to its successors. It is,

however, problems rather than their solutions which can be pointed out.

One of the most fundamental of these problems is the relation of the Christianity established by Paul and his disciples in Asia, to that Ephesian movement of which the Johannine Gospel and Epistles are the chief monuments. It is now generally recognized that the Fourth Gospel is not an historical presentation of the life of Jesus, parallel to that of the Synoptic Gospels; but it is less often perceived that this merely gives us one problem instead of another. It enormously facilitates the reconstruction of an intelligible outline of the life of Jesus—indeed, without it this would be impossible—but it raises the question of the relation of John to Paul, and this has never yet been satisfactorily faced.

Without going into details let me state the question as it presents itself now, not forgetting that what we are likely to see is a question, not its answer.

There are two essential differences between Paul's theology (leaving out, for the moment, the Colossian-Ephesian phase) and John's, using 'John' as a symbol for the Fourth Gospel, not as an attribution of authorship.

First, Paul and John seem to be taking opposite sides in the question whether men are 'God's children' by nature, or become so sacramentally. John certainly thought that sacramental regeneration is universally needed. The Prologue and the story of Nicodemus are unintelligible on any other theory. Did Paul think so? I scarcely believe it, though

Paul's converts may have done so, but the relation of Paul to the growth of sacramental doctrine is terribly obscure.

Secondly, would Paul have thought that the Messiah was the Demiurge? John did think so. I do not believe that Paul did. But this again is a question which has never been thrashed out, and cannot be until the Colossian-Ephesian problem has been solved. Did Paul write these Epistles? Did he write them with their present text? Possibly these questions are insoluble, but they have not yet been sufficiently discussed.

Until these points have been adequately dealt with, we cannot do more than guess whether John represents a development from, or alongside of, Paul.

Let us, however, look at this question from another point of view—the gradual growth of the tradition and the threads of intellectual development. Once more let me emphasize that I am attempting to do no more than throw the apple of discord—the fruit from which springs the tree of knowledge—among the investigators.

Consider first the question of Alexandrian Judaism and Philo. We know that in the first century there was a liberal Judaism which had a Logos doctrine. What became of it in the second century? It absolutely disappeared; but the threads of intellectual tradition, which were dropped by Judaism, seem to have been taken up by Alexandrian Christianity and

Gnosticism. The Logos doctrines of Clement and Philo are not the same, but they are much more closely related than is either to other forms whether of Christianity or Judaism. Unfortunately we know nothing about the beginnings of Christianity in Alexandria beyond the unsupported tradition that Mark founded the Alexandrian Church; but a connecting link between Philo and Clement seems to be provided by the Fourth Gospel. If this book belonged to Alexandria the position would be less difficult, but tradition places it in Ephesus.¹ Did the Philonian tradition affect Ephesus (through Apollos?), produce 'John', and then travel back to Egypt? It is a possible, but very complicated theory, yet in some form or other it is usually accepted without a murmur. But two facts render me dissatisfied with this consenting silence.

In the first place, but perhaps the less important, there is something rather curious in the way that the name 'John' appears. John the son of Zebedee, John the Elder, John Mark. Surely some confusion has entered into the tradition. How much? Where?

Secondly, it seems to me that the importance of the *Epistola Apostolorum*² has hardly been recognized. This book is almost definitely dated in the

¹ A small point of difficulty which I have never seen discussed, though it can scarcely have escaped notice, is that the Fourth Gospel started the tradition that palm-branches were thrown on the road at the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Palms do not grow wild either in Jerusalem or Ephesus, but they do in Egypt.

² See *Texte und Untersuchungen*, xliii, *Gespräche Jesu*, etc., by Carl Schmidt. A short account of the book is given in my *Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. v, pp. 43-5.

year 160 A.D., and one of its secondary purposes is to emphasize the subordinate position of Paul to Johannine Christianity. But it is clear from Acts and I Corinthians that Ephesian Christianity was originally Pauline. Therefore the meaning of the *Epistola* must be that 'Johannine' Christianity represents a later invasion of non-Pauline missionaries who ultimately made terms with the older Pauline Church, recognizing Paul and his writings as authoritative, but subordinate. Moreover, it also seems plain that this Johannine Christianity is not that of the Synoptic Gospels. I cannot help hoping that some day some one will be able to test the guess that it came to Ephesus from Alexandria, and is a development which was originally parallel to, not derived from, Paul's Christianity.¹

However this may be, it is certain that Johannine Christianity, whether by right of descent or by conquest, took over the heritage of Paul's teaching. It became the dominant form of Christianity, and Paul's Christianity was interpreted in the light of its teaching; so that, for instance, Paul's doctrine of the resurrection of a 'spiritual' body was supplanted by the Catholic doctrine of the Resurrection of the Flesh.

Again, the complex of sects which we call Gnosticism present at least as difficult a problem as

¹ The 'Cerinthus problem' must obviously be discussed again, though I think not now. The difference of opinion between Schmidt and Schwartz is extremely important for any full discussion of the Johannine question. For Schwartz's position see the *Zeitschrift für die NT-liche Wissenschaft*, 1914, pp. 210 ff.

Johannine Christianity. Roughly speaking, they were attempts to state Christianity in 'scientific' language.¹ In this respect they are akin to John. Which of them consciously used Paul as a teacher is a question which I cannot now discuss. I do not think that his authority ranked high with any of them save Marcion, who except for one reason—his cosmology—should not be classified with Gnostics at all.

The story of Marcion is well known. He was the son of a bishop of Pontus, and believed that he thoroughly understood the meaning of Paul, travelled to Rome, preached his interpretation, and was excommunicated by the Roman Church. He founded a rival form of Christianity which lasted for more than three hundred years.

Marcion accepted at its full value, and beyond it, everything that Paul had said against the Law, but he concluded that the God who had given the Law

¹They may show traces of Semitic myth, but this element, if present at all, has been immensely exaggerated by Bousset and others, and Gnostics were a movement away from, not towards, current mythology. They personified the current scientific phraseology, 'Mind', 'Wisdom', 'Order', etc., just as modern theological writers sometimes do with 'Energy', 'Ether', 'Force', etc. See especially Robert P. Casey, 'Valentinian Myths', in the *Harvard Theological Review* for January 1932; his *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, in *Studies and Documents*, vol. i, 1934; H. H. Schaeder, 'Bardaisanes', in the *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, July 1932; and F. C. Burkitt, *Gnosis and the Church*. On the other side W. Bousset's *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis* is of the first importance. It should, however, be remembered that 'Gnosticism' is a modern, not an ancient, classification of heretics. Clement of Alexandria claimed to possess 'Gnosis' just as much as did Valentinus. The early Christian accusation was not that the Valentinians or Basilidians were Gnostics, but that they falsely claimed to be so.

to the Jews could not be the same as the God who had sent Jesus into the world to redeem it. Thus he evolved a theory of two Gods. The God of Creation was also the God of the Law and of Justice. He had made the world and created man, but the Law which he had imposed on man was such that human nature could not live up to it, and the God of Creation saw no remedy but to keep on punishing man by heaping misfortune after misfortune on his head, until ultimately another and superior God, of whom the God of Creation was ignorant, intervened out of pity for mankind, and, by sending the stranger Jesus, redeemed men from the Law. Then the God of Justice was obliged to admit that he had sinned in ignorance against his own Law by putting Jesus to death, and he therefore agreed to hand man over from thenceforth to the higher God—the God of Mercy and Love. The apostle of Jesus was Paul, and Marcion regarded himself as Paul's true interpreter. He treated the Pauline Epistles as inspired scripture, and, owing mainly to the polemic of Tertullian, we have a considerable knowledge of the extent to which Marcion's text differed from ours.

The conclusion which Marcion drew was that the Old Testament had no authority for Christians. It was the product of the imperfect teaching of the God of Justice—the God of the Jews—not of the God of Love, the Christians' God.

Thus the situation with regard to the Bible was as follows: the Christians who formed the Catholic Church accepted the Greek Old Testament as

Scripture. Whether by the time of Marcion they had collected other documents which they believed inspired into a book which they regarded as of equal authority with the Old Testament is doubtful. It is certain that they knew many of the books contained in our New Testament, but whether they would have called them 'Scripture' is open to discussion. However that may be, it is clear that Marcion, feeling the necessity for a divinely inspired Scripture, substituted the Pauline Epistles and the Gospel of Luke for the Old Testament. At the same time, or almost so, Catholic Christians organized the four Gospels and the Pauline Epistles (and Acts?) into a New Testament with authority analogous to that of the Old. The question is whether this movement, producing the New Testament, was parallel to Marcion's canon of Scripture or was a result of it.

Marcion, however, did not find the original text, either of the Epistles or of the Gospel of Luke, quite adequate to support his teaching, and he emended the text of both.¹ I suspect, though I cannot prove, that his opponents did the same, so that very prob-

¹ Of course it is theoretically possible that Marcion preserved the original text both of the Gospel and of the Epistles. All the evidence that he emended them comes from the statements of his opponents. Personally I think that he did not emend them quite so much as Tertullian states, but some of the passages quoted as emendations seem to be intrinsically improbable as the original text; and on general grounds I should find it far harder to believe that Marcion, or any one else of his time, copied a text without change, than that he emended it freely. If any one doubts this statement let him study the way in which Matthew emended the text of Mark, the way in which Tatian combined and altered the text of all four Gospels, or, finally, the evidence of the Western text.

ably neither the Marcionite nor the Catholic text of the Epistles or of the Gospel of Luke is identical with the original text.

In stating the matter thus I am deviating somewhat from custom. The more usual presentation of the case would be to say that Marcion corrupted the text which was preserved by the Catholic Church. But I do not think that Catholic nature was any different from Marcionite nature, and I believe that at that period both parties would probably have changed the text to suit their own opinions. Any one who studies the Marcionite variants in the Epistles will sometimes feel that certainty is not always on the side of the Catholic text, and the same thing is true of the Gospel of Luke. In spite of Harnack's brilliant work there is still room for more study on the point, but of course it cannot be carried out satisfactorily by any one who assumes that the Catholic doctrine and the Catholic text are necessarily original.

In passing it may be noted that ecclesiastical custom has changed superficially rather than essentially since the time of Marcion. In those days Scripture was regarded as authoritative, just as it is now. Individual Christians, nevertheless, had their own ideas about truth, and these sometimes conflicted with the text. But Scripture was true: therefore the text must be wrong and it was speedily emended. *Magna est veritas et praevallet*, said the scribe as he changed the words. To-day no one would dream of changing the words either of Scripture or

of creeds, but, even so, some preachers feel just as sure as did the ancient Scribes that they know the Truth, and—since Scripture and the creeds must be true—they explain that Scripture, in spite of its words, really agrees with them. It never really meant that there was an historical apple in Eden which ruined mankind; and when Jesus said ‘sell all that you have and give to the poor’ he meant ‘subscribe liberally to denominational charities’. The method has changed, but the spirit is the same.

Thus, whether Marcion was the first to establish a canon of the New Testament is open to discussion. It is, of course, quite clear that the early Christians possessed the four Gospels, the Acts, and the Pauline Epistles before the time of Marcion. The evidence for this is not strong, but sufficient: it consists in the main of quotations in the Apostolic Fathers who lived before Marcion, and in Justin Martyr, who was his younger contemporary. The difficulty is that the quotations do not prove that their sources were regarded as Scripture.

Until Marcion threw it over, the Septuagint version of the Old Testament was the unquestioned Bible of the Christian Church. It may seem remarkable that they used the Greek version rather than the original Hebrew, but few Christians could read Hebrew, and they supported their preference for the language they knew by claiming that the wicked Jews had corrupted the Hebrew text.

But all Christians also believed in two other

sources of infallible truth: the words of Jesus and his Apostles, and their own utterances when the prophetic inspiration seized them. Thus it was inevitable that before long the record of what Jesus, his disciples, and other 'prophetic' men had said should be treated as Scripture. But obviously the line had to be drawn somewhere.

The real change came when the belief in prophetic inspiration among the living gradually ceased. It was finally suppressed altogether during the Montanist controversy. The clergy then took over, in a slightly attenuated form, the infallibility of the prophet; and ordination by the Church supplanted 'charismata', or spiritual gifts, in the individual. The natural consequence was that as the Church gradually ceased to believe in its own prophetic gift it valued more and more highly the prophetic inspiration of the past. Two generations after Marcion the process was complete, but in order to close the Canon of Scripture the Church, perhaps almost unconsciously, substituted the idea of Apostolic for Prophetic authority.

That the Apostolic Canon is not original is seen by the fact that two of the Evangelists are not Apostles, and Tertullian was hard put to it to explain the fact. The adoption of the rule resulted in the ultimate inclusion in the New Testament of obvious forgeries, such as II Peter, and the ultimate exclusion of books such as Barnabas, Clement, and the Shepherd of Hermas, which had almost established their claim to be Scripture—presumably under the

prophetic canon—and are included in some of the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament, though not in any of the later ones. By the end of the second century the change had been made. But whether the Church had a New Testament Canon before the time of Marcion, or soon after it, and how far the final impetus to making one was or was not reaction against Marcion, seem to me problems which will remain permanently unsolved for lack of evidence.

One of the most important features of the Old Testament is its cosmology. On this is based the belief of the Church that the universe was created by God out of nothing¹—ἐκ τῶν μὴ ὄντων—and that this creation was good. This is of course the view of Genesis, and is summarized in the later forms of the Apostles' Creed by the statement that God the Father is the 'maker of heaven and earth'. The real objection to this theory is not physical but moral. The concept of an omnipotent and omniscient deity who allows the creation of his will to welter in blood and suffering is intolerable, and theologians have never done more than wriggle against this objection. The Gnostics—including Marcion—perceived the difficulty, and denied that creation was the good act of the supreme God. It was on the contrary the mistaken act of a limited and inferior deity. The story of salvation according to them is the intervention of the supreme God to remedy the mistake of the inferior.

¹ This was the difference in orthodox theology between the Cosmos and the Logos. The Cosmos was created out of 'the non-existent'—in denial of the Lucretian dogma *ex nihilo nihil fit*; the Logos was produced by God out of his own substance.

The Gnostic view was energetically combated by the Church, and the cosmology of the Old Testament became central in its theology. Nevertheless, on some points the theory which became orthodox shows a certain parallelism to Gnostic theory. This is, of course, not due to the influence of the heretical Gnostic sects, but to the widespread acceptance of ideas which appear to have been almost universally current.

Thus, though Catholic Christianity defeated Gnosticism, it employed the notion of a Demiurge who is in some way distinct from the supreme God. In the prologue to the Fourth Gospel and in the Nicene Creed the world is created through the Logos. The subtlety of Greek language just reconciles this with the book of Genesis (it says that the world is created *διὰ* not *ὑπὸ* the Logos), but the relation of this doctrine to Genesis is very curious. I cannot think that the Johannine prologue is merely the result of the fact that in Genesis God creates the world by 'speaking'—and thus through his Logos or 'Word'. But this interpretation certainly helped to perpetuate the view that the Logos was the agent of God in the Creation. The Father—who to the ordinary half-educated Christian closely corresponded to the Supreme God of the heretics—was the Creator; but it was the Son, the Logos, who organized the Cosmos.

Irenaeus seems clearly to have recognized this, and also to have given concrete expression to the sense that man is on a different level from the rest of

creation, when he explained that the rest of the world was made by the Logos, but man by the hand of God.¹ This is the analogue to the Gnostic concept that in man, or at least in Gnostic men, there is a spark of divinity, which distinguishes them from the rest of the material creation.²

It is, however, precisely here that the world of modern thought breaks away from traditional Christian doctrine, and if the Church cannot find some way of changing its doctrine on this point it will more and more definitely cease to hold the minds of succeeding generations, because it is certain that physics and metaphysics combine to render untenable the belief in a Being who created matter out of nothing. That is not because any one is prepared to say confidently what was the origin of matter or whether it had an origin, but because it is radically unsound to treat the arbitrary solution of an insoluble

¹ This is also an excellent illustration of the way in which in unphilosophical Christianity 'logos', which sometimes means a 'second God' (as in Justin Martyr), sometimes merely means 'word'. Irenaeus is obviously distinguishing between what God made by his word, and what he made by his hands. The language of Irenaeus is sometimes philosophical: his thought is always anthropomorphic. It is interesting that he, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria produced the three fundamental Christian theologies which by mutual misunderstanding and misinterpretation led to so much controversy and so imposing a mass of theology. Clement is a Platonist—an immaterialist, Tertullian is a Stoic—a materialist, and Irenaeus is an anthropomorphist. All three use the same words, but rarely in quite the same sense.

² It may also be noted that the orthodox doctrine of the Atonement, until Anselm, was that Jesus redeemed man by—at least in appearance—paying off the debt owed to the Devil. This is not very different from Marcionism, for the Marcionite concept of the God of Creation is really very much like the orthodox view of the Devil.

problem as the basis of a system of thought. To think of matter as having had a beginning or as never having had a beginning is a choice between two unimaginabilities. We can conceive of either alternative, but we cannot prove either, or picture either, though a third possibility does not seem to exist. Moreover, I do not think that we are ever likely to accept either the proposition that mind created matter or that matter created mind. All that we can say is that though we find evidence of matter and mind conjoined and never separate, yet the two seem to us to be distinct categories of reality: 'matter' is the word which we use to cover 'phenomena' and 'mind' is one of the words we use to cover 'values'. No one has ever yet found a phenomenon turning into a value or a value turning into a phenomenon; neither has any one ever found a value which was not connected with matter or matter which was devoid of value. Our intellect asserts (or at least mine does) that values and phenomena are eternally distinct but eternally united. They can be thought of apart from each other but they cannot be separated in observation.

It is obvious that this is not a question which can be side-stepped by ignoring the fact that the doctrine of Christianity is what it is. No amount of manipulation can make the story of Genesis agree with the point of view just expressed, and it is perfectly certain that the point of view of Genesis is the inherited point of view of the Christian Church. There is, however, no reason why the Christian Church

should not change its point of view. Nothing binds it but rules which it has made and could unmake if it wished. Chief of these is the rule that it must believe in infallibility. If the Catholic Church would only see the light and admit that it is ignorant, fallible, and limited, but at the same time desirous of learning to think straighter and to do better, its magnificent organization would still remain a power for good to countless generations. Similarly, if Protestantism, conservative or liberal, would abandon its belief in the infallibility either of the Bible or of the 'historic Jesus', it might regain the intellectual leadership which it has lost. When I was a young man I thought that Modernism either in the Catholic or Protestant Church would succeed in making this change, but time has gone by and the ecclesiastics who have the power seem to me infinitely farther behind the times than they were thirty years ago, and the Modernists are dead, silent, or excommunicated.

Parallel to the evolution of the cosmological question is the change from Paul's views on Christology introduced by his successors.

It is quite probable, I think, that they somewhat misunderstood what Paul meant when he said that Jesus is the Lord. Certain points in that statement raise extremely difficult questions. I think it is likely, from his phraseology in I Corinthians xv, that Paul, perhaps for the first time, had 'conflated' the Davidic Anointed One who would restore the fortunes of Israel (which Paul identified with the

Church) for a limited period before the end, with the Anointed One who would come on the clouds of heaven at the End to judge the world. As I have said already, this conflation does not appear in Jewish thought of the Tannaitic period and is probably foreign to the thought of Jesus, who apparently accepted the belief in the Man from Heaven, but not in the Davidic King. Paul, however, accepted both, and, by identifying both with Jesus, identified each with the other. He expected that Jesus would shortly return, that Christians (not others) who had died would be raised from the dead to meet him. They would have 'spirit-bodies', not any longer 'natural' or animal bodies, and Jesus would reign over this community of Christians until 'the End'. This is an easily recognizable variation of the programme of IV Ezra and is obviously closely connected with that of Revelation xx, which is merely more definite in its chronology, and has dropped the change of bodies.

The Church as a whole soon dropped the change of bodies, but it accepted, and still nominally accepts, the identification of the 'Man from Heaven' and the 'Davidic King'; but of late years it has become very reticent about its eschatological expectation, and tries to reconcile the statements of the past with the opinions of the present by calling its disbelief in the eschatological hope of the early Church, which it still affirms in the creeds, by some such disingenuous phrase as 'transmuted eschatology'.

That this Jewish eschatological belief belongs to the region of incredible mythology needs no argument: it is denied quite as really by those who pretend that it means something modern, which Paul never dreamt of, as by those who adopt more obvious methods. Nevertheless it has had extraordinary vitality, and the reason for this is worthy of examination.

There can be little doubt but that when Paul said that Jesus was 'the Lord' he was trying to expound his own belief that Jesus was the Hebrew 'Messiah' or 'Anointed One'. He was too good a Jew to have meant that Jesus was God—*θεός*—though in the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament, the word *κύριος*—'Lord'—which Paul used of Jesus, is habitually used to represent Jahweh.¹

But to Greek listeners the word 'Lord' must have had quite different connotations. It meant a being belonging to the 'divine' category,² standing in a

¹ There is one very difficult passage, I Corinthians viii. 6, where Paul says that 'there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things, . . . and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, etc.'. This seems to me a clear reference to Johannine Logos doctrine and obviously anti-Marcionitic. I believe that it is not Pauline. The Marcionite emendations in the Epistles have often been studied. No one has yet tried to find the Catholic ones.

² It must be remembered that 'God' does not mean the same thing in Jewish and in Greek usage. To the Jew the word 'God' means the creator and ruler, omnipotent, omniscient, and unique; beside him there can be no other God. To the Greek the word 'God' means one of a superhuman class of beings, immortal and incorruptible, but not necessarily omnipotent or omniscient. 'Gods' have the ability to interfere with human affairs, but are not wholly independent of Fate, and not wholly responsible for the creation or government of the world. The Christian concept of God became ultimately more Jewish than Greek, but the influence of the Greek idea is always visible.

special cult-relationship to his initiates, to whom he offered the promise of immortal happiness. Such were the divine heads of all the sacramental cults, and whether Paul meant it or not when he called Jesus a 'Lord' and introduced Baptism and the Eucharist, it was inevitable that the Greeks should accept Christianity as a sacramental cult. Moreover, the whole course of Christian history shows that they did so.

Undoubtedly the immediate effect on Christians of their conversion was that they felt happy, and their new life was attended with emotional excitement. Paul explained that they were happy because they were freed from sin, and that the excitement which they manifested, especially in 'speaking with tongues', was due to the gift of the Spirit.¹

Here arose one of the most important practical problems which Paul had to face. His converts were inclined to value the Spirit for its emotional effect, and much of I Corinthians is devoted to arguing that they are wrong. It is the question already alluded to on p. 100, whether, if experience produces emotion, it is possible to reverse the process and through emotion to produce experience. I was writing then of mysticism. I do not suppose that many of the Corinthians were mystics, but Paul

¹ Paul probably identified the Spirit with the risen Jesus, but his converts probably took the more 'Greek' view that the Spirit was a substance given them by Jesus. Ultimately the Church developed the doctrine of the Trinity which differentiated the Spirit from Jesus, and made it a hypostasis of the Godhead.

cannot have distinguished very clearly between his conversion, which made him feel that he was righteous, and his experience of the indwelling Lord, which made him feel at one with God and man. Perhaps for him they were the same thing: but I think that the experience of many of his converts was solely that of conversion. They suddenly ceased to feel unhappy, mortal, and depressed, and felt happy, immortal, and excited. This sudden change was due to the powerful suggestion of Paul that if they believed his teaching (and were baptized?) this would be the result.

It would naturally have been impossible to persuade either Paul or them that this was not the whole truth, and it would have seemed to them absurd and cynical to ask whether any other belief would not have been equally effective. This, however, is the very disturbing question which modern psychology has propounded. Thousands of unhappy souls are made happy to-day, as they were in the past, by believing in Christ; but just as in the past they were also made happy by believing in Isis, Osiris, and Mithras, so to-day they are also made happy by believing in the gospel of Mrs. Eddy or of Abdul Beha, or of any one else who arouses a keen enough belief in a sufficiently satisfactory message.

The problem is not simple. Then or now, these people surely have a right to be happy. What business have we to prevent them, by insisting that the content of their belief is not true? It is impossible to believe what you do not think to be true; it is

impossible for these persons to be happy without this belief. The practical answer, and often the right one, is 'leave them alone'. They are believing what is not true; but so do we all, without knowing it, and the mere destruction of wrong belief does no special good unless we can put something better in its place. The practical problem is almost sure to face us at intervals in one form or another. If I had a friend dying of some slow but incurable disease and he was convinced that some quack remedy was curing him, would I tell him that he was deceived? In my view it would be a mistake to do so, unless I thought that there was a chance of a real cure in some other way. The problem is even harder with those who are psychically sick. When the faith which they have in some untrue proposition is a really curative suggestion—and the sting of the problem is that apparently it does often cure—why try to undeceive them? Why, indeed, if there were only the sick persons to be considered. But unfortunately they will inevitably insist that the content of their faith is true, and it will spread as an intellectual proposition, and will do harm. Knowledge is good: ignorance is bad—and for the world, not necessarily for individuals, it is not good either to deceive, to be deceived, or to stand by and let others be deceived.

The 'content' of the belief which worked so well on so many generations of Christians is the 'deity' of Jesus, and it is the truth of this which I am denying. Why? My reasons have been given already, but for convenience I will summarize them. Jesus himself

did not believe in it, nor did Paul. This is the clear testimony of the earliest Gospels and those Epistles which are undoubtedly genuine. I see no reason for believing about Jesus what he did not himself believe. It would be a good thing if it were more generally recognized that Jesus did not ask his followers to believe any special proposition about himself, but to lead better lives.

There is moreover a further complication. The process of cure from unhappiness is almost always highly exciting. Paul would have expressed this differently, but I think he clearly perceived the facts. He exhausts language in the attempt to induce his converts to calm down, to do some work, and to be more interested in helping others than in considering themselves. He was not very successful, we may imagine, with the sick souls at Corinth; but he laid down principles of life for sane¹ people, and so builded better than he knew.

The difficulty with the person who finds a way out of unhappiness by religious (or in these days by psychiatric) suggestion is that he forms a habit of seeking happiness through excitement. Happiness ought to be no more exciting than a good digestion, and those who find their way out of unhappiness by the repeated stimulation of excitement have merely exchanged one illness for another. Nor is there any merit in the fact that it is religious excitement. Con-

¹ The 'sick soul' is often perilously close to a 'manic-depressive' or other well-known forms of mental trouble. My impression is that the dividing line between such cases has been imperfectly studied, and that they have often been confused.

stantly to stimulate excitement by religious exercises is just as evil a habit as taking drugs. It is very hard to break, it renders its victim certainly useless and often harmful, and induces an unwarranted sense of spiritual superiority. The religious exercises which do good produce calm, a right judgement in comparative values, a power to understand others, and the humility which comes from knowledge.

Thus the problem which Paul faced in his converts was their confusion of emotion with experience, and the practical difficulty was to persuade them that emotion was not an end in itself. Few writers have ever handled this problem more wisely than did Paul in I Corinthians. He was dealing in the main with glossolalia, that strange intoxication of the inhibitory and speech centres of the brain which is induced by all excitement if it be sufficiently strong and prolonged. But his remarks apply equally well to any attempts to create emotional exaltation in order to induce experience, instead of allowing the emotion to come as the result of the experience.

IX

ETHICAL DIFFICULTIES

ANOTHER point which was important to Paul, and even more to later Christians, was the relation of Conversion to Law and of each to conduct.

It is obvious from the first Epistle to the Corinthians that some of Paul's converts believed that, now that they were saved and inspired by the Spirit of Christ, it did not matter what they did. All things were lawful. Conduct did not matter. Paul adopted a different but quite correct position. He was not willing to deny that all things were lawful. He was not willing to admit that salvation depended on conduct. Nevertheless conduct did matter, and he maintained that conduct would necessarily be governed by and show the results of salvation. There were certain things which the saved man would not do. He was not saved because he did not do these things, but he did not do them because he was saved. Moreover, the kind of thing which the saved man would do or not do was defined with much accuracy in the Law. Thus, in practice there was not much difference between the actual conduct of the saved Christian and the upholder of the Law, except in such things as did not affect conduct—for example circumcision and the rules applying to food. Paul's position is not really difficult to understand by any one who grasps his belief in regeneration,

and the fact that to him the central point in life is what you are, not what you do, so that conduct necessarily follows nature. But it is interesting and important to trace the development of this position among Paul's successors in the Catholic Church. The Church never said 'if you wish to be saved you must keep this or the other regulation'. It did say 'if you are saved you will keep these regulations, and if you do not keep them it is a proof that you are not'. I think that I am right in saying that the best Catholic teaching would always be that the sin which leads to damnation is a defect or a disease of nature and not the overt act of transgression to which that disease leads.¹ This may well be profoundly true; it is, however, obvious that the ordinary man will never see much difference between saying that if you wish to be saved you must keep these rules, and saying that if you are saved you will keep them. The result was that in practice certain parts of the Old Testament and certain parts of the New became the foundation of a modification of the Jewish Law, which had to be observed by all Christians, and to this Law was credited the authority of divine infallibility.

It is difficult to estimate the good and the evil which resulted from this situation. It certainly did some good. It provided the Dark Ages with a standard of conduct which was of great value in that strange period when men seem to have almost forgotten how to think. On the other hand by fixing customs and opinions as to the difference between right and

¹ Provided 'possession' is not involved.

wrong it did a great deal of harm. Especially is this true because it did not distinguish between legislated regulations and the ideal of perfect conduct.

It must be remembered that there are three forms of evil related to conduct, which I would define as crime, vice, and sin. In practice they may often seem to run into one another, but it is very desirable to distinguish them in thought. Crime is essentially the breaking of legislated regulations. The better the laws are the more likely it is that the criminal has done wrong, but the law may be wrong and the criminal right, and all history goes to show that bad laws are not likely to be changed until there is a widespread tendency to break them. In general the community condemns criminals, convicted and unconvicted, but not always. There is a curiously persistent belief, for instance, that the law against homicide is suspended in certain cases by the 'unwritten law'. Lawyers are as a rule blinded by the glamour of their own profession and do not see the force of the argument, but juries feel it very keenly and I am not sure that the juries are not right. Or again, the eighteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States did not break down because it had been tried out, obeyed, and been disapproved of; but because it was always disputed, widely disobeyed, and public opinion had supported the people who disobeyed it.¹

¹ It is undesirable to legislate into the category of crime acts which a large proportion of the most respectable classes insists are not wrong, even though a numerical majority of the population may disagree

Such is crime. The way to reduce it is to have good laws; and the way to have good laws is for legislators to realize that the laws which they make do not and ought not to represent the ideal of good conduct, but are the minimum of good conduct which society insists upon. Any one who does not keep up to that minimum will be banished from society, or otherwise punished, with almost universal approbation. Nearly all the mistakes of modern legislation have been due to unwise reformers who have not grasped the difference between the ideal of good conduct which it is the business of education to inculcate, and the minimum of good conduct which it is the business of the police to enforce. Consequently they have tried impatiently to obtain by legislation what they have failed to get by argument.

The matter stands quite differently with regard to the second class of evil—vice. Vice means doing anything which is harmful to yourself or to society, and beyond all question there is not one of us but is vicious, because no one of us knows what is really bad for us or for others. This is obvious even on the lowest level of life—physical health. We know a little more than formerly, and in consequence we are more healthy. But who can doubt that the wisest constantly do things which are vicious and opposed to sound health? How much more is it probable

with them. It is utterly impossible to enforce such legislation if it be passed; and the theory which calls for unquestioning obedience to the will of the majority is extremely dangerous. The divine right of the majority is a far worse threat to freedom than the divine right of kings ever was: you cannot behead a majority.

that we are equally vicious in the more complicated spheres of social and industrial, to say nothing of spiritual, life?

Legislation provides no cure for vice, but education does; provided that education means study, and not the acquisition of authoritative information. Just as the failure of much modern legislation has been due to a tendency to overlook the limits of what legislation can do, so the failure of much modern education is due to a tendency on the part of teachers to believe that the main business of education is to make their pupils possess more information than they would otherwise, whereas its real function is to make them think, and especially to make them become conscious of the many things which we do not know. True scholarship gives an accurate perception of the dividing line between knowledge and ignorance.

The third form of evil is sin. The essential difference between sin and vice is that vice is unconscious. Vice becomes sin so soon as the person involved knows that it is vice. Sin means seeing the good and choosing the evil, and it is hard to be sure how much sin there is in humanity. Certainly I dissent from the doctrine that we are all miserable sinners and that there is no health in us. I believe, on the contrary, that most people are sinless for long stretches, and sometimes for their whole lives, never consciously seeing the good and choosing the evil. Such persons may be, however, extremely vicious. The more their nature is purely animal, the more likely they

are to be vicious, and the less likely to be sinful. A cow, left to nature, may be vicious, but can hardly be sinful. There seems to be some recognition of this fact in the Catholic doctrine of Invincible Ignorance. Much which in ordinary circles is called sin is either physiological or psychological. Some of it is not evil at all, some of it consists of acts which can be much more properly called the result of disease than of sin. The world is indeed terribly vicious in the sense in which I have used the phrase, but I do not think it is very sinful.

These distinctions between crime, vice, and sin are not found in the New Testament or in early Christian literature, but I think that they are sound. It is obvious that the tendency of the Church was to err in the way in which legislators have erred in recent times. The Church tried to fix by law an ideal of conduct. It is very doubtful whether its ideal was the right one, but it certainly was not one which could be enforced by legislation. Inasmuch as all failure to observe it was regarded as sin it was very easy to prove that every one was sinful, and before long the Christian Church, which had started out by joyfully calling itself 'the saints', ended by admitting, somewhat complacently, that it was a society of miserable sinners. It may have been better in the Dark Ages for the Church to have a fixed code which no one could question, but it is a hindrance for it to have the same one at the present time.¹

¹ I would emphasize that I am not arguing that the Church should lower its ideal: on the contrary it should raise it. The harm arises

Moreover, there is a radical difference in this connexion between ourselves, and not merely Paul's generation, but even that of a century ago. Their whole concept of life was static. They desired a fixed code and believed that both in personal conduct and in the affairs of State a code could be drawn up which should be perfect and never need change.

We have a different concept. To us life is movement. The code by which we live formulates the relation of a growing organism to changing circumstances. Not without effort can we keep the code constantly evolving to suit this developing relationship. Statements made yesterday will be inadequate to-day, and perhaps actually a hindrance to-morrow. Constant revision is needed; and observation and experiment, not the authority of tradition, are the only possible bases of that revision. This holds true not only of legislation, but also of our formulation of the laws of right living, and coming generations will widen the horizon of human vision. Already much is condemned which the Church approves, and much approved which the Church condemns, so that more and more the ecclesiastical code is becoming a monument of the past rather than a beacon for the future.

There is every indication that we are to-day at the when legislators try to make the ideal of the Church the basis of legislation, or when churchmen drop their ideal to the level of legal standards and practical possibility. The two things ought always to be separate and the churchman turned legislator injures both the Church and legislation.

beginning of a great reconsideration of our whole scale of ethics. Three main questions constantly recur—what is our attitude towards sex, force, and wealth?

The first is the only one of these three questions which was at all fully discussed by Paul or by his successors. Unfortunately it cannot be said that their solution of the question has proved satisfactory; in fact much of the obvious maladjustment of social custom to natural fact is due to the persistence of Christian society in maintaining that the teaching of Paul, and to some extent of Jesus, on the problem of sex is final and infallible. Sexual desire is the chief factor in the propagation of the race, and its problems cannot be separated from those of eugenics. But for the early Christians, who thought that 'the whole world stands in evil' (or 'in the power of the devil') and that it was on the eve of dissolution, the problem of propagation was negligible and that of sex stood alone.

The question, in this form, did not trouble the Greeks, or the early Semites, or the early Romans. Sex-desire was to them a fact of life, and that it was wrong in itself certainly never occurred to them. Adultery and rape were crimes against property, or against personal security, and were forbidden as such. A harlot was following an inferior occupation, but those who frequented her society were not sinning.

Then came the time when men suddenly woke

up to the idea that there might be something sinful in the indulgence of appetite—not merely of sex-appetite, but appetite as a whole. The sex-appetite naturally came most obviously into the forefront of consideration because it can be denied altogether in a way that is impossible for eating and drinking, and in the history of morals prohibition and repression usually precede temperance. In every quarter the question arose, ‘would not the really virtuous man live an absolutely non-sexual life?’ Probably the Jews, with their strong sense of the family as the ideal form of existence, asked this question less than others, but by the time that Christianity was established in the Roman Empire the problem had already been put forward. The Corinthians asked Paul what he thought about it, and in I Corinthians vi ff. we have his answer, which, with some modifications, has been accepted as the basis of Christian theory ever since, and is immensely important.

In these chapters he explained that it is best to suppress the sex-appetite altogether.¹ For those, however, to whom complete suppression is too difficult, marriage is a permissible escape. It is not the preferable life; but it is not sin. Moreover, once made, marriage should be indissoluble, and Paul disapproved

¹ It is sometimes said that Paul gave this advice because he thought that the world was coming to an end. This expectation doubtless entered into the subject, but I do not think that it was central. A truer way of putting it would be that he thought that the higher life is that of virginity, and that his certainty that the world was approaching its end relieved him from any consideration of the problem of the continuance of the race.

entirely of divorce. It should, however, be noted that the kind of divorce which he was considering was that of married converts. With the Corinthian belief that virginity was the only quite virtuous life, the problem arose immediately, what should married converts do? Divorce seemed the obvious answer, but Paul's Jewish sense of the importance of the family and the validity of marriage made him reject this answer. Probably he would have objected to divorce altogether, just as Jesus did, but it is important to note that the modern problem of ending a union which is a failure was not the subject of Paul's discussion. He is rejecting the suggestion that converts ought to leave their wives.

The Church accepted, and gradually emphasized more and more, the superiority of the life of virginity for both sexes. Marriage was, as the English Prayer Book puts it, a concession to those who 'have not the gift of continence'. In some places, perhaps, indeed, everywhere, the Church, slightly perverting Paul's teaching, originally held that marriage could not be contracted after baptism. A married person could be baptized, but a baptized person could not be married. The evidence for this point of view is found in Tertullian and Aphraates; but clearly it could not be maintained as soon as infant baptism became the universal practice. The exact evolution of events is hard to trace, but it seems probable that the Church to a large extent transferred to the clergy rules which were originally intended for all baptized Christians. In the Greek Church even now a priest

may not marry, but a married man may become a priest. The exact agreement of this rule with that of the early Church, if 'Orders' are put in place of 'Baptism', cannot be accidental; but, like so many changes, it was probably made almost unconsciously and without any controversy or formal decision.

More serious than any formulated rule was the implicit judgement that the unmarried were on a higher spiritual level than the married, a remarkable illustration of which may be found in the rule of the Greek Church which denies promotion to priests with wives. There could not be a more dysgenic factor in life than this judgement, and I cannot but believe that the secular degeneration of eastern Europe, once the centre of intellectual and spiritual life, was at least partly due to the effects of a doctrine which taught men and women that marriage and the procreation of children was something to be avoided if possible, and that the highest career in life is that of a monk or nun. It meant that only those who willingly accepted an inferior standard became the fathers and mothers of the next generation, while those who saw the higher standard—as they thought—and had sufficient control over their desires, were doomed to sterility. We may be thankful that in the West our own ancestors always remained sufficiently Teuton to minimize the evil influence.

This is all past history: but it has one permanent lesson. Deterioration of a whole race was greatly assisted, if not caused, by a condition which tended to sterilize the finest and best part of the population

while permitting the propagation of the inferior types. The serious results produced by this sterilization ought to be remembered, for at the present time we are repeating the same disastrous experiment. Economic pressure to-day is doing to the intellectual classes throughout the Western world what the Church's teaching did in the fifth and following centuries to the spiritual classes in the Byzantine Empire. At the same time philanthropy¹ is not only helping inferior types to survive, but is absolutely thrusting survival on them. Civilization is, to use an expressive if unpolished phrase, 'monkeying with the death-rate'. It cannot do so with safety unless it also 'monkeys with the birth-rate', and so far as it is doing this at all it is doing it in the wrong direction—hindering the propagation of the better and permitting that of the worse types.

On a closely related problem—divorce—Paul's teaching was accepted by the Catholic Church, which has never abandoned it; it regards marriage as indissoluble except by death. Protestantism has modified this view in the light of Matt. xix. 3-9,² which is supposed—I think erroneously—to accept adultery as a ground of divorce. Probably this very obscure passage, obviously a modification of the clear

¹ I am told that I should not use this word, which is—it is said—'condescending'. 'Social Service' is the correct term: but I disagree. Much of it is undoubtedly philanthropic, but I doubt whether it does any special good to society. The euthanasia of the unfit, not the indiscriminate rescue of all, would be much more help to society.

² The treatment in the Shepherd of Hermas is the best commentary on the possible meaning of Matthew.

statement in Mark which wholly forbids divorce, is connected with the problem of 'forbidden degrees of consanguinity'.

In this detail secular practice has deviated from ecclesiastic, so that in many countries in Europe, and in many of the United States, the laws permit divorce when a marriage is obviously a failure, merely safeguarding the interests of the children and of the weaker party—though the real ground is usually more or less camouflaged. Thus the lawyers have in fact largely returned to the sane methods of Roman Law. But social practice has remained curiously Catholic, and social and professional pressure is exerted to prevent unhappy people from using the possibilities of the Law, and to punish those who insist on doing so. It is not likely that this situation will continue and indeed it is obviously changing. The next generation will surely see that nothing is gained by making unhappiness permanent. The only real argument used even now is that 'the sanctity of the home must be preserved'. That is entirely true. But what sanctity is there in the continued union of those who cannot live together, cannot think together, cannot work together, and have come to regard each other's presence as horrible and painful? In many such cases neither person can be blamed except for having made a marriage which the nature of each doomed to failure. It is doubtless a fault that they ever married each other; but what is gained by forcing the continuance of a tragedy? Certainly the home is not 'sanctified' by it.

Opinions doubtless differ and will continue to differ on the subject. On two points only is there probably universal agreement. (1) A happy marriage is the ideal relationship between men and women; and (2) marriage is a matter of public interest, and should be publicly recorded.

But after this comes a series of propositions about which controversy will continue for many years. Here I propose to give my own opinions, with as fair a statement as I can of opposing views:

The enforced continuance of really unsuccessful marriages is an evil to every one concerned, and a separation which falls short of divorce is a miserable subterfuge. Probably it is right to endure a great deal for the sake of children, but this truth is often grossly exaggerated. There is no advantage in making children live in hell and calling it home.

If there are young children the State has a right and a duty to demand that their interests be properly cared for in any divorce. If the wife or husband is wholly dependent on the other's support, alimony is obviously just, but it ought not to be made punitive. If there are no such complications it should be possible to end marriage, like any other contract, by amicable agreement.

These propositions indicate the need for the general adoption in legislation of easy divorce for marriages which are admittedly failures, and for the recognition by Society that divorce is more often a sad misfortune rather than a subject for rebuke. Divorce closes the account of many years which the 'locust

hath eaten'. Society cannot restore these years, but it need not try to do for the future what the locust has done for the past.

The case against such legislation is almost wholly based on the teaching of Paul and of Jesus.

The teaching of Jesus is contained in Mark x. 2-12, Matthew v. 32, xix. 3-9, and Luke xvi. 18. But whereas Mark and Luke represent him as rejecting divorce, without qualification, Matthew admits 'fornication'—whatever that may mean in this context—as a proper ground. A consideration, however, of the literary relations between the three gospels shows that the version in Matthew must be a later modification of the teaching of Jesus.

There is general agreement that Mark was copied (with emendations) both by Matthew and Luke, and that Matthew and Luke also used another source, commonly called *Q*, which dealt mainly with the teaching of Jesus. In the present case it is clear that Mark x. 2-12 is the original form of a tradition copied in Matthew xix. 3-9, and that the parallel tradition found in Matthew v. 32 and Luke xvi. 18 comes from the *Q* source. It is also clear, according to both, that the teaching of Jesus was an absolute forbidding of divorce, and that the clause 'except for fornication' is an emendation peculiar to Matthew, and due neither to Jesus nor Mark nor *Q*, but to the editor of the first gospel.

In this teaching Jesus was breaking away from the law of Moses, and—as he did in the case of murder—making it harder. If we ask what is the ideal for

ideal men he is undoubtedly right. The perfect life, when possible, is the life of perpetual union, in which 'the two become one' and, as Clement of Alexandria reports that Jesus said, the Kingdom of Heaven comes. But as with the rest of the teaching of Jesus it is a vision of the perfect life, not legislation for weak mortals. The perfect man would never be angry, and the perfect marriage would never be broken; but who is perfect, and how many perfect marriages are made?

It is really the same question as that raised on p. 48. The teaching of Jesus is a magnificent ideal. All men and women ought to strive for that perfect union which makes them feel that they are not only one flesh but one spirit. The ideal is sometimes reached. But the mistake of the Church, and possibly of Paul, was to forget that if this ideal be made the basis of legislation or of social requirement, it means that a very large percentage of marriages will be desperately unhappy, be maintained by a hypocritical subservience to social taboos, and so far from being an advantage to the children of the marriage will be a serious handicap to them, perverting all their views of life.

That the general trend of educated public opinion is moving steadily towards the view which I have commended is I think quite obvious, and it will hardly escape the notice of any historian that it means a return to Roman Law as it was before Theodosius. The history of marriage in Rome is

instructive. The oldest kind of marriage was as indissoluble a union as that of the Catholic Church. Gradually it had become obsolete, and in its place were various forms of contract which, like other contracts, were registered publicly, and could be annulled by mutual consent, or by the courts on the petition of either party if due cause were shown.

There is no evidence that this system worked badly. But it was abolished owing to ecclesiastical pressure, which introduced the Catholic system. This was a return to an experiment which had already failed; and it has failed again, as is shown by the ridiculous subterfuges by means of which rich Catholics who cannot live happily together obtain a decree, not of divorce but of 'annulment'. It is discovered that the marriage had not really been a voluntary union on both sides, or that the parties were in some mysterious way more closely related by consanguinity than Canon Law allows, a situation which happens rather frequently when God-parents are counted in. All these tricks to obtain the benefit of divorce without using the word indicate that the Catholic theory of marriage is a failure; but the terrible and overwhelming proof is the number of unhappy marriages which notoriously exist, and the number of people who submit to all the social and financial disadvantages which divorces now entail rather than continue to suffer.

The fact that Jesus or Paul or any one else living in the first century thought that divorce was always undesirable cannot settle the question for us, who

are living in an age when the whole question of marriage has been rendered different by the education of women and by social conditions such as the first century never dreamt of.

The question of sex has been complicated for the modern world because it was so fully dealt with by Paul and his successors; the questions of force and wealth because they were virtually not dealt with at all. Nevertheless, the fundamental defect of the ecclesiastical attitude is the same in both cases—an unwarrantable belief that the authority of the past, whether by statement or by silence, is a sufficient solution for the problems of the present or the future.

The question of force was never discussed by Paul because, speaking generally, it was not one which the early Christians had any opportunity to decide. Force was so overwhelmingly in the hands of their opponents that its use might be a matter for protest, but scarcely for discussion. It has become important to us because we belong to nations which have the power of imposing their will. Therefore the question arises, to what extent, if at all, is one man justified in imposing his will on another or, to magnify but not change the problem, to what extent is one nation or one class justified in coercing another?

If I see the matter correctly it cannot be solved by any direct answer. There are two lines of argument, each unanswerable, leading to opposite conclusions. The true solution of the problem is not a choice between these arguments but is the resultant of their

opposition, and this is never quite the same in any two cases because the 'opposing forces' never twice meet at exactly the same angle. Possibly some one will some day work out an equation between the factors involved, but it has not been done yet.

On the one hand there is the case for freedom. A man, or a nation, has a right to free choice of action. If a man wishes to live like a pig, or talk like a goose, he has a right to do so. If nations choose to reject all progress and to continue to live in the squalor of primitive savages, they have a right to do so. We are born 'free and equal'. If we see men or nations living foolishly we may point out error, but we must not compel amendment. Education, not discipline, is the path of progress.

On the other hand there is the case for law and order. No man lives for himself alone; he is essentially a member of society, and society has a right to make him behave in the manner which society prefers. No nation lives for itself; it is a part of civilization, and civilization has a right to force nations to conform to its rules.

Both of these arguments are unanswerable. But the first unmodified by the other would produce chaos, and the second unmodified by the first would produce tyranny. Thus there is no easy solution, and the use of force whether by the individual or the state remains in each case a problem to be settled by a consideration of all the circumstances.

As it is with the question of force so it is also with

that of wealth. Neither in the Gospels nor in the Epistles of Paul is there any serious discussion of this subject. In the Gospels there is a clear implication that it is a real hindrance to the attainment of the Life to Come. It is as hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven as for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. A rich young man, anxious to attain eternal life, was told to sell all that he had and give it to the poor. Lazarus passed at his death to the bosom of Abraham while Dives suffered in hell, not, so far as is stated, because one was good and the other bad, but because, since one had enjoyed wealth in this world and the other suffered poverty, in the world to come their lots would be reversed. 'Blessed are ye poor,' Luke makes Jesus say, 'for yours is the Kingdom of God.' 'Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation.'

There can be no mistaking this teaching. If the tradition is right, and there is no reason to doubt it, Jesus thought that wealth should be abandoned by his followers and that the rich had little or no chance of salvation. Apparently the early Church in Jerusalem tried with rather small success to live up to this teaching, but it plays no part in the Pauline Epistles. Probably wealth was a problem which did not often trouble an early Christian, and we have practically no evidence of the evolution from the early 'anti-wealth' position to that of the Shepherd of Hermas. In this the comforting doctrine is established that both rich and poor have their appointed place in the economy of things, in which the rich have the duty

of providing for the poor and the poor that of praying for the rich.

One point only is stressed by Paul. It is the duty of men to work for their living. Obviously there was a danger of Christians thinking so much of their souls that they left it to others to provide for their bodies. Such teaching can scarcely be called specifically Christian, but Paul's influence doubtless played a part in establishing the sound tradition of European ethics. It is, however, perhaps allowable to observe that such teaching fails to touch the really difficult problem of our own times.

In centuries past, the most pressing problem of society on the industrial side was the production of wealth by the use of labour. The amount of work which could be done by a number of individuals was the limit set to the production of wealth for the community, and this limit could soon be reached. To-day, owing to the use of 'power', exactly the reverse problem is found. The necessary amount of production is easily and soon reached: but the number of persons needed, or, to put it a little differently, the amount of personal toil needed, is limited. If every one worked as long and as hard as they used to do the world would soon be piled so high with unnecessary 'products' that there would be no room to move. The problem of obtaining 'labour' no longer exists: in its place we have the problem of allotting leisure. The problem is certainly not beyond the powers of human intelligence, but it carries with

it an ethical problem which neither Paul nor his successors felt—the ‘Ethics of Leisure’. I foresee that our children will produce many books on this subject, and ultimately a good one, on the basis of which the theory of social ethics will be enlarged and enriched.

Thus, summarizing the situation with regard to the three great problems which were mentioned above as being the outstanding questions of the present time, it is clear that while Paul said much about sex, and profoundly modified—not entirely for good—the attitude of society from his time until ours, he said practically nothing either about ‘force’ or ‘wealth’. For that reason I have had much less to say about them. Nevertheless, I would be very sorry if it seemed that I thought them less important. Possibly they are even more important and more difficult. The shortness of my treatment is partly due to a recognition of my ignorance, partly to the fact that it would be out of place to discuss in this consideration of Paul and his successors questions which never troubled the apostle.

Nevertheless, properly and critically understood, history is a guide to the future by its silences as well as by its utterances, no less than a picture of the past, and all historians find in their studies that the great men of the past have handed on to us a mixed legacy of good and evil. The future depends on whether we have enough intelligence to chose the good and reject the evil. No one can do men’s memories a

worse service than by pretending that their legacy is unmixed good. So it is with St. Paul. Few men have given us a richer legacy, but the good and the evil in it must be critically studied if conservation and reform, both in theology and morality, are to be properly combined in the foundations of a new and better society.

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